SHORT WHIST

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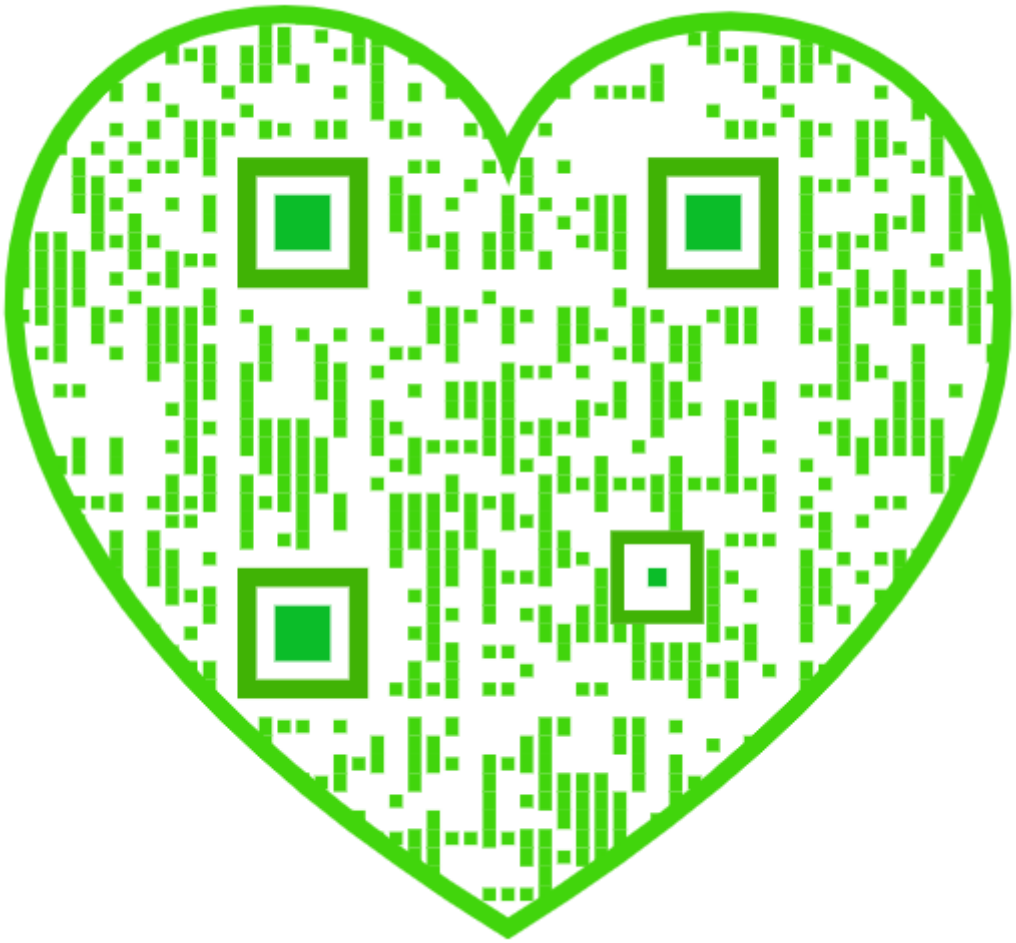

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THE

LAWS OF SHORT WHIST

EDITED BY

J. L. BALDWIN.

Adopted by the following London Clubs;

ARLINGTON.	GUARDS'.
ARMY AND NAVY.	JUNIOR CARLTON.
ARTHUR'S.	KILDARE STREET
BOODLE'S.	LEINSTER.
BRIGHTON AND SUSSEX.	OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE.
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BROOKES'S.	RALEIGH.
CARLTON.	REFORM.
CHELTENHAM AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE.	ROYAL YACHT SQUADRON.
CONSERVATIVE.	ST. JAMES'S.
GARRICK.	WHITE'S.

AND

A TREATISE ON THE GAME

By J. C.

First American Edition, with an Introduction.

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TO WHIST-PLAYERS.

Some years ago I suggested to the late Hon. George Anson (one of the most accomplished whist-players of his day) that, as the supremacy of Short Whist was an acknowledged fact, a revision and reformation of Hoyle's Rules would confer a boon on whist-players generally, and on those especially to whom disputes and doubtful points were constantly referred. Our views coincided, but the project was, for the following reason, abandoned. Fully aware that a more diffuse code of laws, sanctioned by authority of the leading clubs, was an absolute necessity, still more conscious were we that in persuading the whist-world to adopt any innovation on old rules, we must incur a certain amount of difficulty and trouble, with a very uncertain chance of success.

In subsequent years, having witnessed many questionable cases, which, despite the existence of

Hoyle and other authors, were invariably referred to *the* whist-players of the day, I determined to make an effort, and appeal to some of the London clubs for their assistance and support. The following gentlemen most kindly consented to co-operate with me, and appointed J. CLAY, Esq., as their chairman:—

G. BENTINCK, Esq., M.P.,	*Arlington; Carlton; Travellers'; White's.*
J. BUSHE, Esq.,	*Arlington; Arthur's; Boodle's; Portland; Travellers'; White's.*
J. CLAY, Esq., M.P.,	*Arlington; Oxford and Cambridge; Portland.*
C. GREVILLE, Esq.,	*Arlington; Brooke's; Travellers'; White's.*
R. KNIGHTLEY, Esq., M.P.,	*Arlington; Boodle's; Carlton; White's.*
H. B. MAYNE, Esq.,	*Arlington; Arthur's; Portland; Oxford and Cambridge.*
G. PAYNE, Esq.,	*Arlington; Arthur's; White's.*
COLONEL PIPON,	*Arlington; Army and Navy; Portland.*

On May 2, 1863, the committee of the Arlington Club passed the following resolution:—

That the above-mentioned gentlemen do act as a com-

mittee to frame a Code of Rules for Whist, which, if approved, be adopted at the Arlington Club.

H. J. ROUS, *Chairman.*

This committee, having prepared a code of laws, sent it to the Portland, with a request that it might be adopted by that club. At a general meeting the following gentlemen most kindly consented to act as the Portland Club Whist Committee:—

H. D. JONES, Esq., *Chairman.*

CHARLES ADAMS, Esq.	SAML. PETRIE, Esq.
W. F. BARING, Esq.	H. M. RIDDELL, Esq.
H. FITZROY, Esq.	R. WHEBLE, Esq.

Their suggestions and additions were immediately accepted by the Arlington, and on Saturday, April 30, 1864, the following resolution was proposed and carried unanimously:—

ARLINGTON CLUB.

That the Laws of Short Whist, as framed by the Whist Committee and edited by John Loraine Baldwin, Esq., be adopted at this Club.

BEAUFORT, *Chairman.*

I will no longer trespass on the reader's time and patience than to express my very grateful

thanks to all those gentlemen who have so kindly lent their valuable aid in supplying a want in the whist-world,—viz., a code of laws which has already received the sanction of some, and will, I trust, eventually obtain the sanction of all the leading clubs of London.

JOHN LORAINE BALDWIN.

May, 1864.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

ALTHOUGH the game of Short Whist has been for some time the current game in Europe, it is still comparatively new to American players.

The volume herewith presented contains a code of laws which, as a standard for reference, have been accepted by the best authorities; but, as a manual of instruction for the uninitiated, they require some little explanation.

The only difference not readily comprehensible between Short Whist and the old-fashioned game is in the manner of scoring. The laws bearing on this subject are those marked 1, 8, 9, and 10.

In Short Whist the "Rubber" (see law 1) takes the place of the "Game," as played under the old method. It takes about the same time to play a rubber of Short Whist that it does to play a game in the old way; and there are peculiarities in the scoring which make the rubber the integral standard adopted to test the players, just as the game is the integer under the old

practice. On this account, when a rubber is decided in two games, a new rubber at once begins. The reasons for this will become apparent as we proceed.

The word "point," as used in the statement of laws 8, 9, and 10 (which see), is equivalent to the word "game" in the nomenclature of old-fashioned whist. For example, a treble (see law 8) is one game of the value of three ordinary games, a double is one game of the value of two ordinary games, and a single is an ordinary game.

The winners of the rubber (see law 9) score as if they had won two additional games. For example: if the winners have won two singles during the rubber, they score four,—two for the games and two for rubber points.

But (see law 10) if, in the case just stated, the winners of the rubber did not win it in the first two games, and if the losers of the rubber won the second game, scoring on it a treble, their three points would have to be deducted from the four points scored by the winners of the rubber, leaving the latter winners by only one point. This makes manifest the reason for giving the winners of the rubber the two rubber points; for without them, in the case just stated, the winners would score but two, while the losers would score three.

Perhaps a second illustration will make the principles already explained, more clearly understood. Suppose the winners of a rubber to have scored a treble on the first or second game, and a single on the third: this makes their score four for games and two for rubber points,—total six. Suppose that the losers of the rubber won a double on the first or second game: these two points must be deducted from the six scored by the winners of the rubber, leaving the latter winners by but four points.

From the foregoing, if it be fortunately expressed, it will be understood that the winners of a "rubber" of Short Whist may win by from one to eight points, just as the winners of a "game" of old-fashioned whist may win by from one to eleven.

H. H.

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THE LAWS OF SHORT WHIST.

THE RUBBER.

1. The rubber is the best of three games. If the first two games be won by the same players, the third game is not played.

SCORING.

2. A game consists of five points. Each trick, above six, counts one point.

3. Honors, *i.e.*, Ace, King, Queen, and Knave of trumps, are thus reckoned:

If a player and his partner, either separately or conjointly, hold—

I. The four honors, they score four points.

II. Any three honors, they score two points.

III. Only two honors, they do not score.

4. Those players who, at the commencement of a deal, are at the score of four, cannot score honors.

5. The penalty for a revoke takes precedence of all other scores. Tricks score next. Honors last

6. Honors, unless claimed before the trump card of the following deal is turned up, cannot be scored.

7. To score honors is not sufficient; they must be called at the end of the hand: if so called, they may be scored at any time during the game.

8. The winners gain—

I. A treble, or game of three points,* when their adversaries have not scored.

II. A double, or game of two points, when their adversaries have scored less than three.

III. A single, or game of one point, when their adversaries have scored three, or four.

9. The winners of the rubber gain two points (commonly called the rubber points), in addition to the value of their games.

10. Should the rubber have consisted of three games, the value of the losers' game is deducted from the gross number of points gained by their opponents.

11. If an erroneous score be proved, such mistake can be corrected prior to the conclusion of the game in which it occurred, and such game is

* See Introduction to American edition.

not concluded until the trump card of the following deal has been turned up.

12. If an erroneous score, affecting the amount of the rubber, be proved, such mistake can be rectified at any time during the rubber.

CUTTING.

13. The ace is the lowest card.

14. In all cases, every one must cut from the same pack.

14. Should a player expose more than one card, he must cut again.

FORMATION OF TABLE.

16. If there are more than four candidates, the players are selected by cutting; those first in the room having the preference. The four who cut the lowest cards play first, and again cut to decide on partners; the two lowest play against the two highest; the lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and having once made his selection, must abide by it.

17. When there are more than six candidates, those who cut the two next lowest cards belong to the table, which is complete with six players; on the retirement of one of those six players, the

candidate who cut the next lowest card has a prior right to any aftercomer to enter the table.

CUTTING CARDS OF EQUAL VALUE.

18. Two players cutting cards of equal value, unless such cards are the two highest, cut again; should they be the two lowest, a fresh cut is necessary to decide which of those two deals.

19. Three players cutting cards of equal value cut again; should the fourth (or remaining) card be the highest, the two lowest of the new cut are partners, the lower of those two the dealer; should the fourth card be the lowest, the two highest are partners, the original lowest the dealer.

CUTTING OUT.

20. At the end of a rubber, should admission be claimed by any one, or by two candidates, he who has, or they who have, played a greater number of consecutive rubbers than the others is, or are, out; but when all have played the same number, they must cut to decide upon the out-goers; the highest are out.

ENTRY AND RE-ENTRY.

21. A candidate wishing to enter a table must

declare such intention prior to any of the players having cut a card, either for the purpose of commencing a fresh rubber, or of cutting out.

22. In the formation of fresh tables, those candidates who have neither belonged to nor played at any other table have the prior right of entry; the others decide their right of admission by cutting.

23. Any one quitting a table prior to the conclusion of a rubber may, with consent of the other three players, appoint a substitute in his absence during that rubber.

24. A player cutting into one table, whilst belonging to another, loses his right of re-entry into that latter, and takes his chance of cutting in, as if he were a fresh candidate.

25. If any one break up a table, the remaining players have the prior right to him of entry into any other, and should there not be sufficient vacancies at such other table to admit all those candidates, they settle their precedence by cutting.

SHUFFLING.

26. The pack must neither be shuffled below the table nor so that the face of any card be seen.

27. The pack must not be shuffled during the play of the hand.

28. A pack, having been played with, must neither be shuffled by dealing it into packets nor across the table.

29. Each player has a right to shuffle, once only, except as provided by Rule 32, prior to a deal, after a false cut, or when a new deal has occurred.

30. The dealer's partner must collect the cards for the ensuing deal, and has the first right to shuffle that pack.

31. Each player after shuffling must place the cards properly collected, and face downwards, to the left of the player about to deal.

32. The dealer has always the right to shuffle last; but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling, or whilst giving the pack to be cut, he may be compelled to re-shuffle.

THE DEAL.

33. Each player deals in his turn; the right of dealing goes to the left.

34. The player on the dealer's right cuts the pack, and, in dividing it, must not leave fewer than four cards in either packet; if in cutting, or in replacing one of the two packets on the other, a card be exposed, or if there be any confusion of the cards, or a doubt as to the exact place in

which the pack was divided, there must be a fresh cut.

35. When a player, whose duty it is to cut, has once separated the pack, he cannot alter his intention; he can neither re-shuffle nor re-cut the cards.

36. When the pack is cut, should the dealer shuffle the cards, he loses his deal.

A NEW DEAL.

37. There must be a new deal—

I. If during a deal, or during the play of a hand, the pack be proved incorrect or imperfect.

II. If any card, excepting the last, be faced in the pack.

38. If, whilst dealing, a card be exposed by the dealer or his partner, should neither of the adversaries have touched the cards, the latter can claim a new deal; a card exposed by either adversary gives that claim to the dealer, provided that his partner has not touched a card; if a new deal does not take place, the exposed card cannot be called.

39. If, during dealing, a player touch any of his cards, the adversaries may do the same, without losing their privilege of claiming a new deal, should chance give them such option.

40. If, in dealing, one of the last cards be exposed, and the dealer turn up the trump before there is reasonable time for his adversaries to decide as to a fresh deal, they do not thereby lose their privilege.

41. If a player, whilst dealing, look at the trump card, his adversaries have a right to see it, and may exact a new deal.

42. If a player take into the hand dealt to him a card belonging to the other pack, the adversaries, on discovery of the error, may decide whether they will have a fresh deal or not.

A MISDEAL.

43. A misdeal loses the deal.

44. It is a misdeal—

I. Unless the cards are dealt into four packets, one at a time in regular rotation, beginning with the player to the dealer's left.

II. Should the dealer place the last (*i.e.*, the trump) card, face downwards, on his own or any other pack.

III. Should the trump card not come in its regular order to the dealer; but he does not lose his deal if the pack be proved imperfect.

IV. Should a player have fourteen cards, and either of the other three less than thirteen.

V. Should the dealer, under an impression that he has made a mistake, either count the cards on the table, or the remainder of the pack.

VI. Should the dealer deal two cards at once, or two cards to the same hand, and then deal a third; but if, prior to dealing that third card, the dealer can, by altering the position of one card only, rectify such error, he may do so, except as provided by the second paragraph of this law.

VII. Should the dealer omit to have the pack cut to him, and the adversaries discover the error, prior to the trump card being turned up, and before looking at their cards, but not after having done so.

45. A misdeal does not lose the deal if, during the dealing, either of the adversaries touch the cards prior to the dealer's partner having done so; but should the latter have first interfered with the cards, notwithstanding either or both of the adversaries have subsequently done the same, the deal is lost.

46. Should three players have their right number of cards, the fourth have less than thirteen, and not discover such deficiency until he has played any of his cards, the deal stands good; should he have played, he is answerable for any

revoke he may have made as if the missing card or cards had been in his hand; he may search the other pack for it or them.

47. If a pack, during or after a rubber, be proved incorrect or imperfect, such proof does not alter any past score, game, or rubber; that hand in which the imperfection was detected is null and void; the dealer deals again.

48. Any one dealing out of turn, or with the adversary's cards, may be stopped before the trump card is turned up, after which the game must proceed as if no mistake had been made.

49. A player can neither shuffle, cut, nor deal for his partner without the permission of his opponents.

50. If the adversaries interrupt a dealer whilst dealing, either by questioning the score or asserting that it is not his deal, and fail to establish such claim, should a misdeal occur, he may deal again.

51. Should a player take his partner's deal and misdeal, the latter is liable to the usual penalty, and the adversary next in rotation to the player who ought to have dealt then deals.

THE TRUMP CARD.

52. The dealer, when it is his turn to play to

the first trick, should take the trump card into his hand; if left on the table after the first trick be turned and quitted, it is liable to be called; his partner may at any time remind him of the liability.

53. After the dealer has taken the trump card into his hand, it cannot be asked for; a player naming it at any time during the play of that hand is liable to have his highest or lowest trump called.

54. If the dealer take the trump card into his hand before it is his turn to play, he may be desired to lay it on the table; should he show a wrong card, this card may be called, as also a second, a third, &c., until the trump card be produced.

55. If the dealer declare himself unable to recollect the trump card, his highest or lowest trump may be called at any time during that hand, and, unless it cause him to revoke, must be played; the call may be repeated, but not changed, *i.e.* from highest to lowest, or *vice versâ*, until such card is played.

CARDS LIABLE TO BE CALLED.

56. All exposed cards are liable to be called, and must be left on the table; but a card is not

an exposed card when dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table.

The following are exposed cards:—

I. Two or more cards played at once.

II. Any card dropped with its face upwards, or in any way exposed on or above the table, even though snatched up so quickly that no one can name it.

57. If any one play to an imperfect trick the best card on the table, or lead one which is a winning card as against his adversaries, and then lead again, or play several such winning cards, one after the other, without waiting for his partner to play, the latter may be called on to win, if he can, the first or any other of those tricks, and the other cards thus improperly played are exposed cards.

58. If a player, or players, under the impression that the game is lost, or won, or for other reasons, throw his or their cards on the table face upwards, such cards are exposed, and liable to be called, each player's by the adversary; but should one player alone retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it.

59. If all four players throw their cards on the table face upwards, the hands are abandoned, and no one can again take up his cards. Should this

general exhibition show that the game might have been saved or won, neither claim can be entertained unless a revoke be established. The revoking players are then liable to the following penalties: they cannot under any circumstances win the game by the result of that hand, and the adversaries may add three to their score, or deduct three from that of the revoking players.

60. A card detached from the rest of the hand so as to be named is liable to be called; but should the adversary name a wrong card, he is liable to have a suit called when he or his partner has the lead.

61. If a player who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called fail to play as desired, or if when called on to lead one suit he lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of that suit demanded, he incurs the penalty of a revoke.

62. If any player lead out of turn, his adversaries may either call the card erroneously led, or may call a suit from him or his partner when it is next the turn of either of them to lead.

63. If any player lead out of turn, and the other three have followed him, the trick is complete, and the error cannot be rectified; but if only the second, or the second and third, have

played to the false lead, their cards, on discovery of the mistake, are taken back: there is no penalty against any one, excepting the original offender, whose card may be called, or he, or his partner, when either of them has next the lead, may be compelled to play any suit demanded by the adversaries.

64. In no case can a player be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

65. The call of a card may be repeated until such card has been played.

66. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR, OR NOT PLAYED TO A TRICK.

67. If the third hand play before the second, the fourth hand may play before his partner.

68. Should the third hand not have played, and the fourth play before his partner, the latter may be called on to win, or not to win, the trick.

69. If any one omit playing to a former trick, and such error be not discovered until he has played to the next, the adversaries may claim a new deal; should they decide that the deal stand good, the surplus card at the end of the hand is

considered to have been played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.

70. If any one play two cards to the same trick, or mix his trump, or other card, with a trick to which it does not properly belong, and the mistake be not discovered until the hand is played out, he is answerable for all consequent revokes he may have made. If, during the play of the hand, the error be detected, the tricks may be counted face downwards, in order to ascertain whether there be among them a card too many; should this be the case, they may be searched, and the card restored; the player is, however, liable for all revokes which he may have meanwhile made.

THE REVOKE

71. Is when a player, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit.

72. The penalty for a revoke—

I. Is at the option of the adversaries, who at the end of the hand may either take three tricks from the revoking player, or deduct three points from his score, or add three to their own score;

II. Can be claimed for as many revokes as occur during the hand;

III. Is applicable only to the score of the game in which it occurs;

IV. Cannot be divided; *i.e.* a player cannot add one or two to his own score and deduct one or two from the revoking player;

V. Takes precedence of every other score; *e.g.* the claimants two, their opponents nothing; the former add three to their score, and thereby win a treble game, even should the latter have made thirteen tricks and held four honors.

73. A revoke is established if the trick in which it occur be turned and quitted, *i.e.* the hand removed from that trick after it has been turned face downwards on the table, or if either the revoking player or his partner, whether in his right turn or otherwise, lead or play to the following trick.

74. A player may ask his partner whether he has not a card of the suit which he has renounced; should the question be asked before the trick is turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish the revoke, and the error may be corrected, unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

75. At the end of the hand, the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks.

76. If a player discover his mistake in time to save a revoke, the adversaries, whenever they think fit, may call the card thus played in error, or may require him to play his highest or lowest card to that trick in which he has renounced; any player or players who have played after him may withdraw their cards and substitute others: the cards withdrawn are not liable to be called.

77. If a revoke be claimed, and the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries, the revoke is established. The mixing of the cards only renders the proof of a revoke difficult, but does not prevent the claim and possible establishment of the penalty.

78. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

79. The revoking player and his partner may, under all circumstances, require the hand in which the revoke has been detected to be played out.

80. If a revoke occur, be claimed and proved, bets on the odd trick, or on amount of score, must be decided by the actual state of the latter, after the penalty is paid.

81. Should the players on both sides subject

themselves to the penalty of one or more revokes, neither can win the game; each is punished at the discretion of his adversary.

82. In whatever way the penalty be enforced, under no circumstances can a player win the game by the result of the hand during which he has revoked; he cannot score more than four. (See Rule 61.)

CALLING FOR NEW CARDS.

83. Any player (on paying for them) before, but not after, the pack be cut for the deal, may call for fresh cards. He must call for two new packs, of which the dealer takes his choice.

GENERAL RULES.

84. Where a player and his partner have an option of exacting from their adversaries one of two penalties, they should agree who is to make the election, but must not consult with one another which of the two penalties it is advisable to exact; if they do so consult, they lose their right; and if either of them, with or without consent of his partner, demand a penalty to which he is entitled, such decision is final.

This rule does not apply in exacting the penal-

ties for a revoke; partners have then a right to consult.

85. Any one during the play of a trick, or after the four cards are played, and before—but not after—they are touched for the purpose of gathering them together, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

86. If any one, prior to his partner playing, should call attention to the trick,—either by saying that it is his, or by naming his card, or, without being required so to do, by drawing it towards him,—the adversaries may require that opponent's partner to play the highest or lowest of the suit then led, or to win or lose the trick.

87. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

88. If a bystander make any remark which calls the attention of a player or players to an oversight affecting the score, he is liable to be called on, by the players only, to pay the stakes and all bets on that game or rubber.

89. A bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question.

90. A card or cards torn or marked must be either replaced by agreement, or new cards called at the expense of the table.

91. Any player may demand to see the last trick turned, and no more. Under no circumstances can more than eight cards be seen during the play of the hand, viz.: the four cards on the table which have not been turned and quitted, and the last trick turned.

ETIQUETTE OF WHIST.

The following rules belong to the Established Etiquette of Whist. They are not called laws, as it is difficult, in some cases impossible, to apply any penalty to their infraction, and the only remedy is to cease to play with players who habitually disregard them.

Two packs of cards are invariably used at Clubs: if possible this should be adhered to.

Any one, having the lead and several winning cards to play, should not draw a second card out of his hand until his partner has played to the first trick, such act being a distinct intimation that the former has played a winning card.

No intimation whatever, by word or gesture, should be given by a player as to the state of his hand, or of the game.

A player who desires the cards to be placed, or who demands to see the last trick, should do it for his own information only, and not in order to invite the attention of his partner.

No player should object to refer to a bystander who professes himself uninterested in the game, and able to decide any disputed question of facts, as to who played any particular card—whether honors were claimed though not scored, or *vice versâ*,—&c. &c.

It is unfair to revoke purposely; having made a revoke, a player is not justified in making a second in order to conceal the first.

Until the players have made such bets as they wish, bets should not be made with bystanders.

Bystanders should make no remark, neither should they by word or gesture give any intimation of the state of the game until concluded and scored, nor should they walk round the table to look at the different hands.

No one should look over the hand of a player against whom he is betting.

DUMMY

Is played by three players.

One hand, called Dummy's, lies exposed on the table.

The laws are the same as those of Whist, with the following exceptions:—

I. Dummy deals at the commencement of each rubber.

II. Dummy is not liable to the penalty for a revoke, as his adversaries see his cards: should he revoke and the error not be discovered until the trick is turned and quitted, it stands good.

III. Dummy being blind and deaf, his partner is not liable to any penalty for an error whence he can gain no advantage. Thus, he may expose some, or all of his cards, or may declare that he has the game, or trick, &c., without incurring any penalty; if, however, he lead from Dummy's hand when he should lead from his own, or *vice versâ*, a suit may be called from the hand which ought to have led.

DOUBLE DUMMY

Is played by two players, each having a Dummy or exposed hand for his partner. The laws of the game do not differ from Dummy Whist, except in the following special law:—There is no misdeal, as the deal is a disadvantage.

A TREATISE ON SHORT WHIST.

By J. C.

James C Clay

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EXPLANATION OF TECHNICAL TERMS.

Ace second, &c.—Ace with one other card. In the same way, king second, queen second, &c. With two cards we say ace three. With three, ace four, &c.

Bumper.—A rubber of eight points; *i.e.* one in which the adversaries have not scored.

To establish a suit.—To exhaust the best cards in it which are against you, and retain its entire command.

Finesse, or, to finesse.—To endeavor to take a trick, or to keep the command of a suit, by playing, when second or third to play, a card lower than some one or more cards in your hand, and not in sequence with it or them, on the chance that the intermediate card or cards may be with your right-hand adversary.

To force, or, a force.—To play a card which forces some player either to trump it, or to lose the trick. Thus you force your adversary with a winning card, your partner with a losing one.

Hand.—The thirteen cards held by each player. The entire play of all the four hands of each deal is also called a hand.

King-card.—The best card left in each suit is its king-card.

Long trump or trumps.—The last trump or trumps left during the play of a hand.

Leader.—The first to play in each round.

Love.—No score.

Renounce.—Holding none of the suit played, to play a card of another suit.

Revoke.—Holding a card of the suit played, to play a card of any other suit.

Rubber.—The best of three games.

Ruff, or, to ruff, or, to trump.—To play a trump to a suit in which you are wholly deficient.

Saw or see-saw.—When you and your partner have each renounced a different suit, and play alternately each the suit which the other trumps.

Sequences.—Three or more cards in the order of their value. A sequence of three cards is called a tierce—of four, a quart—of five, a quint—of six, a sixieme, and so on. Ace, king, and queen are called tierce-major; ace, king, queen, and knave, quart major; and so on. Other tierces, quarts, &c., are called after the card which heads them, as a tierce, quart, &c. to a king or to a queen, &c.

Singleton.—One card only in a suit.

Slam.—The making every trick.

Tenace.—The best and third best card left in any suit, as ace and queen, which is the major tenace. If both these cards have been played, the king and knave become the tenace in the suit, and so on.

Trumps.—The suit to which the turned-up card belongs.

Underplay.—See page 107.

CURRENT ODDS AT SHORT WHIST.

At the commencement of the game or rubber, it is 5 to 4 on the dealer for the game, and 6 to 5 on him for the rubber, either bet being slightly better to take than to lay.

1 to love with the deal is 11 to 8 on the game, and 5 to 4 on the rubber; the deal being against, the betting on either game or rubber is even.

2 to love with the deal is 13 to 8 for the game. The deal being against, it is 11 to 8. For the rubber, with the deal, it is 3 to 2. The deal being against, 11 to 8.

3 to love, or 4 to love, with the deal is 2 to 1 on the game. The deal being against, it is 15 to 8. In this case, the odds on the rubber are the same as those on the game.

The first game being won, if the deal for the second game were in abeyance, the exact odds on the winner for the rubber would be 3 to 1. The current odds are, however, 5 to 2; but it is as good a bet to lay 3 to 1 with the deal, as 5 to 2 against it.

The first game, and 1 to love of the second, with the deal is 7 to 3. The deal being against, it is 3 to 1.

The first game, and 2 to love of the second, with the deal, is 7 to 2, and is an advantageous bet to lay. The deal being against, the odds can scarcely be called less, but they are not disadvantageous to take.

The first game, and 3 or 4 to love of the second, with the deal or against it, is 4 to 1. No higher odds than these are ever given at any stage of the rubber,

unless an honor has been turned up by the winners of the first game, and of the first 3 or 4 points of the second game, when 5 to 1 may be laid. The 4 to 1 bet, however, is advantageous to lay with the deal, and not disadvantageous against it.

The deal against the first point is an even bet for the game or rubber.

It is an even bet that the dealer has two points, or more. For the purpose of this bet it is held that the dealer has two points, although he may not be able to score them; *i.e.* the bet is won if the dealer and his partner hold two by honors, although, the adversaries being game by tricks, such honors are not scored. This bet is very slightly in favor of the layer.

The foregoing odds, though, for the convenience of betters, they are not exactly calculated, are as near an approximation to the exact calculations as can be given without going to fractions or getting into very high figures.

TREATISE ON SHORT WHIST.

CHAPTER I.

ADVICE, MAXIMS, AND RULES FOR BEGINNERS.

"How am I to learn whist?" is a question which must often have been addressed to every good whist-player, and which he, in all probability, has not found easy to answer; for almost all the works of any value on this game treat of the old game, long whist, partly because it is the old game, partly because it is said to require more skill than the modern, or short whist. I shall not stay to consider whether this is so or not. It is enough for me that the old game is dead, and the modern in full vigor, in spite of at least one very glaring defect,—the undue value of the honors, which are pure luck, as compared with

that of the tricks, which greatly depend on skill. Short whist bears this mark of its hasty and accidental origin. If the change had been carefully considered, the honors would have been cut in half, as well as the points. Two by honors would have counted one point. Four by honors would have counted two. Had this been so, the game would be perfect; but the advantage of skill would be so great as to limit considerably the number of players. Some eighty years back, Lord Peterborough having one night lost a large sum of money, the friends with whom he was playing proposed to make the game five points instead of ten, in order to give the loser a chance, at a quicker game, of recovering his loss. The late Mr. Hoare, of Bath, a very good whist-player, and without a superior at piquet, was one of this party, and has more than once told me the story. The new game was found to be so lively, and money changed hands with such increased rapidity, that these gentlemen and their friends, all of them leading members of the clubs of the day, continued to play it. It became general in the clubs, thence was introduced to private houses, travelled into the country, went to Paris, and has long since so entirely superseded the whist of Hoyle's day, that of short whist alone I

propose to treat. I shall thus at least spare to my reader the learning much in the old works that it is not necessary for him to know, and not a little which, if learned, should be at once forgotten.

"How am I to learn whist?" I will tell you how I learned it myself. Like most beginners, I looked on whist for a considerable time as a bad game of chance, and at last became tired of being the undoubted muff of my party. I was constantly told, "You knew I had the best heart;" or, "We only wanted three tricks. Why did you not play your ace of clubs, when you knew me with the two last trumps?" Or again: "You knew every card in my hand," and such like observations. It is true, I was perfectly innocent of the knowledge imputed to me; but I took it for granted that, when gentlemen of good sense and good character assured me so frequently of my intimate knowledge of their hands, that at least I ought to know them, and that there must be some way of acquiring the information. I set to work to find it out, and was surprised at its simplicity. Whist is a language, and every card played an intelligible sentence.

I am addressing beginners only, yet may give them credit for knowing that which is self-evi-

dent, viz., that, having no pretension to take a trick, it is right to play the least valuable card in the suit, the deuce of course, if in the hand, as being the most worthless card. Also, I suppose them to know that in leading from an ace-king, or a king-queen suit, not being trumps, it is right to lead the king. Starting with this small stock of knowledge, let us look at the first round of a hand. We will take a very probable one, and let us see how much of the language of whist we already understand. I will distinguish the players by the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4.

1. Having an ace-king suit, leads the king. Thus, if an adversary trumps the first round, or the leader sees cause to change his lead, it is clear that he probably holds the ace. Had he played his ace, he would have given no indication of the position of the king.

2. Plays the four.

3. Plays the six.

4. Plays the eight.

Let us put this into words.

1. Having made the trick, says, "I either hold the ace, or I hold the queen; in which case my partner holds the ace, or my king would not have been permitted to make the trick. It may be that I hold all three,—ace, king, and queen."

2. Says, "I do not hold the deuce or the three; otherwise I should not have played the four."

3. Says, "I do not hold the deuce, the three, or the five; otherwise I should not have played the six."

4. Says, "I do not hold the deuce, the three, the five, or the, seven; otherwise I should not have played the eight."

Three players having told us that they do not hold the deuce, or the three, it is clear that these two cards are in the hand of the leader. For a similar reason it is also clear that the five is either with the leader or the second player, and that the seven is with the leader, or with the second or third player.

I have treated these indications as infallible; but it may be that the ace of the suit has been held back by an adversary. It is rarely good play to do so, but it is very possible that it has been so, or one of the players may have asked for trumps. (See Chapter on "Asking for Trumps.") In either of these cases, the second round of the suit will undeceive you. Some player also may in carelessness have played a wrong card. But I put this supposition aside, as the only safe plan is to consider that cards, especially in such an in-

significant case as this, are regularly played, according to the known rules of the game.

Let us now pursue our suit. The leader, having won the first trick with his king, leads the ace.

2. Plays the five.
3. Plays the queen.
4. Plays the knave.

We have ascertained that no player has asked for trumps, and one suit is already pretty well known to us. The third and the fourth players have no more of it, and its remaining cards are with the leader and the second player.

We will suppose that the leader's suit was originally ace, king, ten, three, and deuce; he still holds, therefore, the ten, three, and deuce, which the second player knows as well as himself, while he knows that the second player must hold the two remaining cards, viz., the nine and the seven. If the leader plays his ten, it is true that he will force his right-hand adversary, and give his partner an opportunity, by throwing away a losing card, of indicating the suit which he wishes not to be led, and this may be of great advantage; but, on the other hand, he will leave the second player with the best card of the suit, the nine, hereafter to be played, it may be, with fatal effect.

On such considerations, on such balance of advantage and disadvantage, the good player regulates his play; and, as the game goes on, each trick being full of information to the careful observer, by the time that the hand is half played out he arrives at a pretty accurate idea of the broad features of each hand; and when but three or four cards remain to each player, he very frequently knows almost to a card where they are to be found, arriving at this knowledge as much by having observed the cards which each player cannot possibly hold as by those the position of which during the play has been plainly indicated.

A beginner may object to my illustration that it is too much to expect from his unpractised memory and observation that he should commence by observing the deuces and the threes. So it is. I chose my illustration as one which tolerably explained my meaning, but do not advise him to puzzle himself at first, if he finds that it does puzzle him, by straining his memory about the small cards. Let him content himself at first by carefully observing the broad indications of the game, such as the different leads, whether strong or weak, the invitation to lead a trump, the cards thrown away, &c., all which I hope to explain to him as I go on. With care,

and with his eyes never wandering from the table, each day will add to the indications which he will observe and understand. He will find that mere memory has less to do with whist than he imagines,—that it matters little whether the five or the six is the best card left of a suit, as long as he knows, which he generally ought to know, who has that best card. Memory and observation will become mechanical to him, and cost him little effort; and all that remains for him to do will be to calculate at his ease the best way of playing his own and his partner's hands,—in many cases as if he saw the greater portion of the cards laid face upwards on the table. He will then be a fine whist-player.

Talking over the hand after it has been played is not uncommonly called a bad habit and an annoyance. I am firmly persuaded that it is among the readiest ways of learning whist; and I advise beginners, when they have not understood their partner's play, or when they think that the hand might have been differently played with a better result, to ask for information and invite discussion. They will of course select for this purpose a player of recognized skill, and will have little difficulty in distinguishing the dispassionate and reasoning man from him who

judges by results, and finds fault only because things have gone wrong. They will rarely find a real whist-player so discourteous as to refuse every information in his power; for he takes interest in the beginner who is anxious to improve.

Much is also to be learned by looking over good players, who will generally be willing to explain the reasons for their play; but the learner should only look over one hand, which he should follow carefully, as if he were himself playing it.

I will now endeavor to reduce to maxims or rules the points to which a beginner should chiefly direct his attention, begging him to remember that, as they are observed by all moderately good players, most of them furnish those indications as to the position of the cards to which I especially invite his consideration, and an observation of which, more than any thing else, will help him to become an accomplished whist-player.

He must not be discouraged if he not unfrequently loses by his obedience to rules; for good play and bad play do not mean that the one must win and the other must lose. Let us suppose that he doubts between playing two cards,—call them the ace of clubs and the ace of spades,—

and that by calculation it is six to four in favor of playing the ace of clubs. If he plays it, he plays right; if he plays the ace of spades, he plays very badly; yet, if the calculation is correct, he will gain four times out of ten by playing what is called, and what is according to probability, the wrong card. He may be contented, however, by gaining the remaining six chances, and this proportion will bring him through triumphantly in the long run.

Lastly, although the following rules may occasionally speak of things to be never done and others to be always done, he must remember that no rules are without an exception, and few more open to exceptional cases than rules for whist. But he has not yet arrived at the exceptions. Let him play for a time, it may be a year, rigidly according to rule, and he will then be in a position to seize the occasions on which rule should be departed from. In the mean time he will have amused himself to little, if any, disadvantage; and the fine player will scarcely have asked for a better partner than one who, by careful attention to rule, has given to him every possible indication of the position of the cards, and has enabled him, so to speak, to play twenty-six cards instead of thirteen.

MAXIMS.

Count your cards before playing to the first trick.

Carefully study your hand when you take it up, and consider the score of the game, as it is useless to scheme for two or three tricks if you only require one, or to make the odd trick only at the score of one or three, if your adversaries probably hold honors which will make them the game. Having done this, keep your eyes constantly on the table, never looking at your hand except when it is your turn to play. No one can become even a moderately good whist-player whose attention is not constantly given to the table.

Avoid getting into any particular habit of sorting your cards, such as always putting your trumps in the same place, &c. Players of no great delicacy may easily gain from your peculiarities some indication of your strength; and even the most loyal may find difficulty in not noticing them, and being somewhat influenced by the information which they have unintentionally acquired.

Be sure to remember the trump card, however low its value.

When your partner renounces a suit, never fail to ask him whether he is sure that he has none of it. If he revokes, and you have neglected this precaution, the fault is as much yours as it is his.

If you have omitted to notice how the cards fell to a trick, ask that they be placed.

Endeavor to remember as many of the cards played as you can. They will in time all dwell on your memory; but you must begin by at least knowing all the chief cards which have been played, and by whom, in each suit. It is, however, still more important, and will greatly aid your memory, to observe with whom the strength in each suit probably lies. At this knowledge you may generally arrive thus: in all the first leads of the different suits, but especially in those of your partner, compare the card led with those of the suit which you hold, and those which are played to the first round, in order to ascertain whether the leader has led from a strong or from a weak suit. To make this calculation you must remember,—

1st. That strong suits, with the exception of a king, knave, ten suit, are led either from their highest or lowest card, and not from a middle card. From the highest card, unless the ace,

only when the suit is headed by two or more cards of equal value.

2d. That, with a suit of two or three weak cards, it is right to lead the highest.

Bear this in your mind. Your partner leads, say, the six: you have the seven, eight, ten, and queen. If this is his strong suit, and if, consequently, the six is the lowest of four cards, his other three cards must be the nine, knave, with king or ace. You finesse your ten; for, if your partner is strong, your ten, he holding the knave, is as good as your queen. If he is weak, you are right to protect your suit as well as you can, and finesse against the knave. If your ten is taken by the knave, all doubt is at an end: your partner has led from a weak suit. He has not the knave, therefore the six cannot be the lowest of four cards, and it is, almost to a certainty, the highest of two or three small cards. I say "almost to a certainty," because it is possible that he may have led from six, nine, with king or ace. But I am speaking of an original lead; and such a suit would be so bad a lead that you would very rarely find it from a good player. In illustration of the meaning of my advice to compare the first card led in a suit with the cards which you held in it and the first round played,

I have taken a tolerably obvious case; but the habit of this comparison will speedily enable you to distinguish, four times out of five, the weak from the strong lead.

Short of some unfailing indication such as the foregoing, take it for granted if your partner is a good player that his first lead is from his strongest suit.

If your partner refuses to trump a certain winning card, lead him a trump as soon as you get the lead; and, if necessary, run some risk to get it. If, however, you are yourself strong in trumps, bear in mind that he may not improbably have no trump at all,—in which case you must make the best of your own hand. If he has refused to trump from strength, you ought to have the game between you.

Observe the score of the game and play to it,—not trying to make two tricks when one is enough, or fearing to run a necessary risk to make the number of tricks required to save or win the game. To illustrate the meaning of "playing to the score," take the following case: You have the lead, and four cards in your hand, two small trumps, two better being left in against you, and two winning cards. You want two tricks to save the game. Play one of your winning cards, and

if it is not trumped play the other. Your game is saved. So that you do not play a trump, you must make two tricks; but if, in order to save the game, it is necessary to make three tricks, you have but one chance, viz., to play a trump; and if the two trumps against you are in different hands, they fall together, and your three tricks are made. If the two trumps against you are in the same hand, the game is lost in whatever way you play it.

Do not force your partner unless you hold four trumps, one of them being an honor,—unless to secure a double ruff, which you have the means of making as obvious to him as it is to yourself.

Or to make sure of the tricks required to save or win the game.

Or unless he has already been forced and has not led a trump.

Or unless he has asked to be forced by leading from a single card or two weak cards.

Or unless the adversary has led or asked for trumps.

This last exception is the slightest of the justifications for forcing your partner when you are weak in trumps; but it is in most cases a sufficient apology.

It follows from the above that there can be but

few whist offences more heinous than forcing your partner, when he has led a trump, and you are yourself not very strong in them. To justify your force, when he has led a trump from strength, you should be able to answer for winning the game, unless this should be the only way in which you can give him the lead.

Do not give away a certain trick by refusing to ruff, or otherwise, unless you see a fair chance of making two tricks at least by your forbearance.

Lead through strong suits and up to the weak suits,—the latter being generally the better thing to do.

Let the first card you throw away be from your weakest suit. Your partner will take this as if you said to him, "Do not lead this suit unless you have great strength in it yourself." The observance of this is so important that in the great majority of hands, especially when you hold a very strong suit, you should prefer to unguard a king or a queen rather than deceive your partner as to the suit you wish him to lead.

It is less dangerous generally to unguard a king than a queen. Unless the ace of the suit is led out, or lies with your left-hand adversary,—and even in this case, if he leads a small card of

the suit,—you will make your king without his guard. If, from fear of unguarding your king, you have deceived your partner as to your strong suit, he will of course lead the suit from which you have not thrown away; and in this case, if the ace is to your left, your king falls, and the guard, which you unwisely kept, is of no service. In like manner remember that the card first thrown away by your partner is from his weakest suit, and do not lead it unless it is an advantageous lead for your own hand, even in the event of his having no one strong card in it. He has told you that you must expect nothing from him in this suit; and, should you find him with some little strength in it, you may be pretty sure that he is stronger still in the other suits.

This indication should be a most valuable guide to you in the play of the rest of the hand.

Never play false cards. The habit, to which there are many temptations, of trying to deceive your adversaries as to the state of your hand, deceives your partner as well and destroys his confidence in you. A golden maxim for whist is, that it is of more importance to inform your partner than to deceive your adversary. The best whist-player is he who plays the game in the simplest and most intelligible way.

Keep the commanding card, or the second best guarded of your adversary's suit, as long as it is safe to do so; but be careful of keeping the commanding card single of your partner's, lest you should be obliged to stop his suit.

With four trumps do not trump an uncertain card, *i.e.* one which your partner may be able to win. With less than four trumps and no honor, trump an uncertain card.

With a weak hand, seek every opportunity of forcing your adversary. It is a common and fatal mistake to abandon your strong suit because you see that your adversary will trump it. Above all, if he refuses to trump, make him, if you can; and remember that when you are not strong enough to lead a trump, you are weak enough to force your adversary.

Be careful, however, of leading a card of a suit of which neither adversary has one. The weaker will trump, and the stronger will take the opportunity of throwing away a losing card, if he has one.

Let your first lead be from your strongest suit.

The strongest leads are from suits headed with ace, king, or king and queen, or from sequences.

In leading from two cards of equal value,—say king and queen, or from a sequence,—lead the

highest; but when not the leader, take, or try to take, the trick with the lowest.

If, however, you have five cards in a suit, with a tierce or a quart to a king, it is well to lead the lowest of the sequence in order to get the ace out of your partner's hand, if he has it, and thus retain yourself the full command of the suit. It is wrong, though frequently done, to lead the knave from a tierce to a king, unless you have at least five cards of the suit; as, if either of your adversaries holds the ten and three small cards, he will be left with the ten, the best of the suit after three rounds, if your partner, having the ace, has played it on your knave.

Return your partner's lead when you have not good suits of your own.

When you return your partner's lead, if you held originally four or more cards in his suit, return to him the lowest of those left to you. If you held originally but three of his suit, return to him the highest. Thus with ace, ten, three, and deuce, you should take with the ace and return the deuce. With ace, ten, and deuce only, you take with the ace, and return to him the ten.

The foregoing is, of all similar rules, to my mind the most important for the observance of whist-players. It proceeds on the theory that,

if you have four cards of a suit, you are strong enough in it to husband your own strength; whereas, if you have but three, you will do best to throw such strength as you have into your partner's hand. But careful attention to this rule has a much more important significance. It assists your partner to count your hand. You take the first trick in the suit which he leads, say, with the ace, and you return the ten. He is sure that you hold either no more, or only one more of the suit; and when to the third round you play a low card, he knows that you have no more. You would not have returned the ten if you had held originally four cards in the suit. Again, if you return to him, say, the deuce, and to the third round play a higher card, he knows that you have still a card left in his suit, because, if you had originally held only three cards in his suit, you would have returned to him the higher of the two left in your hand, and not the deuce. The importance of the knowledge which you have enabled him to acquire is scarcely to be overrated. In trumps, for instance, when he holds one, with only one other left against him, he will very frequently know, as surely as if he looked into your hand, whether that other trump is held by you or by an adversary. It follows from the

above that you should not fail to remark the card in your own lead which your partner returns to you, and whether that which he plays to the third round is higher or lower than that which he returned.

THE LEAD.

In leading from two cards, lead the higher. A lead from a queen or knave and one small card is not objectionable, if you have a miserably weak hand, or one in which all the other suits are manifestly disadvantageous: your queen or knave may be valuable to your partner. But the lead from king and one small card can hardly ever be forced on you, and is only justifiable when your partner has indicated by the cards he has thrown away that this is his strong suit; or when, to save or win the game, it is clear that he must be strong in the suit. The ace and one small card can also scarcely ever be an advantageous lead unless under similar circumstances.

In leading from three cards, lead the highest. Avoid, however, leading from the king or the queen with two small cards of the suit. The cases are very rare when either of these leads can be forced on you. With nothing else to do, and without any indication from your partner,

you will be right to lead the lowest card; but when he has shown you that this is his strongest suit, you will generally be right in leading the highest. Avoid, also, leading from king, queen, and one small card. If this suit is led elsewhere, you will generally make both your king and your queen, unless the ace is to your left, and sometimes even then. Whereas, if you lead the suit, and the ace is against you, you can only make one trick.

A lead from queen, knave, and one small card, or knave, ten, and one small card, is not bad when you have no better suit.

The lead from ace and two small cards is rarely advisable. The ace is better kept to bring in your strong suit. If forced on you, the lead is from the lowest card.

From king, queen, with two or more small cards of the suit, not being trumps, lead the king. In trumps, lead the lowest card.

From queen, knave, and two or more small cards, or from knave, ten, and two or more small cards, lead the lowest.

Hoyle advises that, when with queen, knave, and others, you hold the nine; or, with knave, ten, and others, the eight; or with ten, nine, and others, the seven, &c., you should lead your high-

est in order to finesse your nine, or your eight, &c., as the case may be, on the return of your lead; and this was the old system. It is now, however, generally abandoned as disadvantageous at short whist, and I doubt its being generally right at the long game.

If, however, the game is in such a position as to oblige you to win every trick in the suit, your best chance will be, having the suits I have described, to lead the highest card.

With an honor and three or more small cards, lead the highest card.

With four, five, or more small cards, lead the lowest, unless they are headed by a sequence.

With any number of cards in a suit, not being trumps, headed by ace and king, lead your king and, unless you see cause to change your lead, continue with the ace. If you are obliged to change your lead, your partner will thus know that in all probability you hold the ace. Had you played the ace he would have had no knowledge of the position of the king.

In like manner with tierce major or quart major of a suit, lead your king and follow with the queen, thus always keeping your partner in the knowledge of the position of the ace. With an ace, king suit, however, if you are strong in

trumps, and if the other suits are exhausted, or if you have no chance of making tricks in them, you will not unfrequently be right in leading a small card,—the more so if your right-hand adversary has thrown from the suit.

With ace and three small cards, lead the lowest.

With ace and four small cards, lead the ace, and follow with the lowest.

The foregoing two rules are in accordance with long-established English practice, from which, however, the players of the Paris Clubs dissent, and from ace and three small cards play out the ace, as we do from ace and four or more small cards. The increased intercourse of late years between London and Paris, leading in many other things to an assimilation of fashions, has induced some players to adopt in this respect the Paris system, and has introduced some confusion into our best whist-parties. Formerly, if a player led an ace and then a small card of a suit, you felt sure that he had led either from ace and one small card, or from ace and four or more small cards of the suit. You of course soon ascertained which: you made your calculations and counted the cards in his hand accordingly. But you are no longer safe in feeling sure that the

lead is not from ace and three small cards. Your friend may have taken to French fashions, and you will do well carefully to observe these eccentricities and lay your account for the probability of their occurrence on a future occasion. I advise adherence to the old rule as given above. I believe it to be right; and feel at least sure that, right or wrong, it is good policy to observe it, in order not to mislead your partner, until it is shown to be wrong and generally discontinued.

The lead from king, knave, ten, and others is exceptional. It is the only case of leading a middle card, and the practice is to lead the ten. With so strong a suit you cannot afford to give a trick to any thing less than the ace or queen; and the ten is chosen, instead of the knave, as the card to lead, in order to distinguish this from the lead from a knave ten suit. Here, again, Paris play differs from ours; and, though the ten is led in other suits, the knave is led in trumps. Here, again, also, some few English players create confusion by following the French fashion. It may be right: there is little real difference in the two systems; but, as long as our practice remains what it is and what it has always been, the knave, from king, knave, ten, and others in trumps, is

as wrong a card to play in England as, from the same suit, the ten would be in France.

With ace, king, and others in trumps, lead the lowest card, unless you have seven cards of the suit. This will be almost always right when you have not scored, and generally as the first lead of the hand at any score. Later in the hand many circumstances may make it right to secure two rounds of trumps.

The lead from a single card is very generally condemned as an original lead; and as a habit it is very bad, though not unfrequent. The player who generally leads from a single card, if he happens to have one, is always suspected and speedily found out. His partner never knows what he is to expect from him, and probably, being strong in trumps, draws the trumps, returns what he has reason to believe to be his partner's strong suit, and finds him with none of it; or, it may be, suspecting the usual singleton, he dares not play a trump when he otherwise would have done so. This habit is destructive of all confidence, frequently helps to establish your adversary's strong suit, and is likely to mislead and sacrifice your partner.

SECOND HAND.

Playing high cards when second to play, unless your suit is headed by two or more high cards of equal value, or unless to cover a high card, is to be carefully avoided.

With two or three cards of the suit played, cover a high card. Play a king, or a queen, on a knave, or ten, &c.

With four cards, or more, of the suit played, do not cover, unless the second best of your suit is also a valuable card. Thus, with a king or queen and three or more small cards, do not cover a high card; but if, along with your king or queen, you hold the ten, or even the nine, cover a queen or a knave.

With king and another, not being trumps, do not play your king, unless to cover a high card.

With king and another, being trumps, play your king.

With queen and another, whether trumps or not, play your small card, unless to cover.

With knave and one small card, or with ten and one small card, or with nine and one small card, play the small card, unless to cover.

With two cards of less value than the foregoing, play the smaller.

With king, queen, and one or more small cards, play the queen, the suit not being trumps.

In trumps, if along with your king and queen you hold two or more small cards, you may frequently venture to pass the trick, and give to your partner a chance of making it, when you have reason to believe that your adversary has led from strength. If his partner, however, has asked for trumps, or if the card led indicates weakness in the leader, play your queen.

With queen, knave, and one small card, play the knave.

With queen, knave, and two or more small cards, play the lowest.

With knave, ten, and one small card, play the ten.

With knave, ten, and two or more small cards, play the lowest.

With ten, nine, and one small card, play the nine.

With ten, nine, and two or more small cards, play the lowest.

With other cards of lower value than the foregoing, play the lowest.

With ace, queen, and others, play the lowest when you have reason to believe that your adversary has led from his strong suit; but if it is ob-

vious that he has led the best card of a weak suit, put on your ace, and, if you wish to establish that suit, at once continue it with your smallest card. Thus, if the card led is the knave, you are sure that it is the best card which the leader holds in that suit; and if you do not play your ace, you may lose it by its being trumped.

If the card led is the ten, there is cause for consideration. The ten may be a singleton, or the highest of two or three small cards, in which case you should play your ace. But it may also be the recognized card to lead from a king, knave, ten suit, in which case of course the queen is the card to play. A nine, or even an eight, if you do not yourself hold the nine, may expose you to somewhat equal difficulty, as the one may be a legitimate lead from king, knave, ten, nine, and the other from king, knave, ten, nine, and eight.

In this difficulty you must calculate as well as you can whether the card led is from a strong or a weak suit, and play accordingly your ace, your queen, or your lowest card. Nor will you ever be without some means of forming your calculation. If the leader is a good player, and this his original lead, take it for granted that it is his strong suit, and play your queen. A good player almost

always originally leads his strongest suit. If the leader's partner has thrown from this suit, thereby indicating that it is his weakest, believe it to be the leader's strong suit. He will not have led it, after his partner's indication, unless he is very strong in it; and you may feel pretty sure that his ten is led from king, knave, ten, and others. But if this is a forced lead, and the leader has previously led another suit, and that not one of commanding strength, you may be almost certain that his new lead is a weak suit, and that he has led his best card in it; if not, and he had held a king, knave, ten suit, he would have led it in preference to that which he did lead. Again, if this lead occurs late in the play of the hand, it is probable that you know so many cards which must be in the leader's hand as to be sure that there is no room left in it for this to be a strong suit. By such considerations as these you must be guided. They will sometimes lead you wrong; more frequently they will be almost unfailing indications; but, however this may be, you must make the best of them, as it is impossible to frame a rule which shall be a sure guide what card to play, second hand, on a ten, or a nine, when you yourself hold ace, queen, and others.

With ace, queen, ten, alone or with others, play

the queen. If you lose her to the king, you still have the tenace over the original leader.

With ace, queen, knave, or with ace, queen, knave, ten, &c., play the lowest of the equal cards.

With ace, king, knave, play the king. The second round in the suit will tell you whether the lead was from strength or weakness, and you will finesse your knave, or not, accordingly.

With ace, king, and others, not being trumps, play the king. In trumps, unless the leader has led from weakness, you may safely play your lowest card, and give to your partner the chance of making the trick. Nor does a card, led from weakness, bar you from doing this, if other considerations make it advisable. Say that a nine is led, it is almost certain that this is the leader's best trump; if his partner holds both queen and knave, you probably lose nothing by having passed the nine. It may be finessed, and your partner may make his ten. But if he holds an honor, he will, in all probability, make it, if even it is his only card in the suit.

With ace, knave, ten, and others, not being trumps, play your lowest card; your ten would be played uselessly, for there is at least one honor behind you, either with the third player, who

must play it, or with your partner; for if the leader had held king and queen he would have played the king. In trumps, however, it is frequently right to play the ten, as in this suit it is not improbable that both the other honors are with the leader.

Play an ace on a knave.

It is generally right to play an ace on a queen. If, however, the leader's partner has given you cause to believe that this is his weak suit, either by throwing it away or otherwise, or if your partner, by throwing away from other suits, has given you reason to hope that here he may have some strength, you may with advantage pass the queen, and give to your partner the chance of holding the king. It is to be presumed that the leader has led from his strong suit, probably from a tierce to a queen, with another card. By passing the queen, if your partner has the king, you still hold the ace behind your adversary's strong suit, which is better than that your partner should hold the king to its right hand. For, when the lead is returned, the original leader must play one of the two remaining cards of his tierce in order to draw your ace; whereas, had you played your ace on the queen in the first round of the suit, on its return your partner

must play his king, leaving the original leader with both the knave and the ten, if he originally held four cards in the suit.

With ace, ten, and another, you may safely pass the queen; the best which the leader can have is queen, knave, and a small card, and this is most probably his strength in the suit. If you pass the queen, and your partner has the king, the leader makes no trick in his suit, as you are behind him with an ace, ten. Your only risk is that the queen may be a singleton, or that the leader's partner may hold the king single; nor is this risk great.

In the second round of a suit, if you hold the winning card, or third best card of such suit, you must be guided in your play by the indications which the first round will have given you. It will be generally right to take the trick, if you hold the winning card; but you may not unfrequently pass the trick, if you feel pretty sure that your partner holds the second or third best card.

Thus, you hold ace and two small cards in a suit; your right-hand adversary leads a small card, you play your lowest, the third player plays the knave, and your partner takes the trick with the queen. It is pretty clear that your left-hand ad-

versary does not hold the ten or king; had he held either, he would not have played the knave. If this suit is led again with a small card, but one which is higher than his first, by the same leader, and you are thus again second hand, you may again with safety play a small card. The leader does not hold king and ten, for as these have become equal cards, he would have led one of them. It is therefore clear that your partner holds either the ten or the king, and that, whichever he holds, he can win the trick.

Again, if you hold in the second round the third best card of the suit, you will be sometimes right to play it if you have reason to believe that your partner holds the winning card, which you may thus preserve to him.

If your suit is a long one, say even four cards, you must bear in mind the danger that your partner's winning card may be single, and that he may be forced to take the trick which is already yours. There is also the further risk that, believing you to have no more of the suit, he may miscalculate your strength and that of the other players in the remaining suits. The foregoing is therefore an experiment which I cannot recommend to young players.

THIRD HAND.

The third hand is, as a general rule, expected to play his best card to the suit which his partner has led, and which, in the case of an original lead, is, or, in the vast majority of hands, ought to be, his partner's strongest suit. By playing your best card, therefore, to your partner's lead, if you do not take the trick, you at least assist him to establish his strong suit.

With an ace, queen alone, or with others of the suit, it is advisable to finesse your queen; for you cannot lose by this mode of play unless in the improbable event of the king being single behind you. If it is to your right, or held by your partner, your queen is as good as your ace.

If you have reason to believe that your partner's lead is from a weak suit, you may make any other finesse, and protect your own suit, if it is worth protecting, as well as you can. Thus, with a nine led in a suit of which you hold king, knave, and others, you may finesse your knave, or pass the nine, if not covered by the second player, as the state of the game and of your hand may dictate.

Or with knave, nine, and others of a suit, you may finesse your nine or pass an eight, if led

and not covered. There are a great number of similar cases with which practice will make you familiar.

There are several considerations which will lead you to judge whether your partner's lead is from a strong or a weak suit. The card he leads, when compared with those of the suit which you hold, may show you that it cannot be the lowest of four, or even of three cards, or that, if it is, the card against which you would finesse is in his hand.

Or he may have led before, and you have found that his lead was from a suit of but little strength. In this case, as his first lead ought to have been from his strongest suit, it is fair to presume that his second is yet weaker.

Or if one suit has been played out, or is plainly the adversary's suit, and you have thrown away a card from a second, it is very likely, when your partner leads a third suit, that he has done so, not because he is strong in it, but to avoid leading the suit which you have shown him to be your weakest.

It can hardly ever be right to play the queen on your partner's ten when not covered with the knave by the second player. Unless he has led from ten, knave, king, in which case your queen

can do no good, the ten is almost to a certainty his best card in the suit, and you are right to finesse against the knave.

In trumps, especially when very strong in them, you may finesse more deeply than in the other suits. You may occasionally finesse against two cards. Thus, with ace, knave, ten, if there is no indication of a strong necessity for securing two rounds, you may play your ten. If your partner holds no honor, you secure two tricks in the suit, unless the two other honors lie behind you. If he does hold an honor, the finesse is generally as good in your hand as in his.

With an honor turned up to your right, you should finesse your ten, holding ace, knave, and ten, and almost always your knave, holding ace and knave alone, or with a small card or cards.

The finesse of knave, from king, knave, is rarely right, unless your hand is such that you can almost answer for winning the game, if your partner has led from strength, or unless it is obvious that he has led from weakness.

In the second round of a suit you often know that the best card remaining in it is behind you. Thus, holding king and others, you have led a small card, and your partner has won the trick with the queen. He returns to you a small card;

you know the ace to be behind you; your partner has it not, or he would have played it; your right-hand adversary has it not, or he would not have allowed the queen to make the trick. In this case, if along with your king you hold the ten, you must play it and finesse against the knave. If the fourth player holds both the ace and the knave, it cannot be helped. He will make both tricks, but you have taken the only chance for your king.

The foregoing is equally good in any other combination of the cards, when on the second round you find yourself with the second and fourth best of the suit, and a certainty or strong probability that the best lies behind you. Thus, your partner, on your lead, wins the trick with the ace, and returns to you a small card. You hold the queen and ten; you are right to finesse your ten, for if the second player had held the king he would have played it most probably, the suit not being trumps, and, in trumps, at least as often as not.

As third player, you must bear in mind that "to finesse" means to retain in your hand the best card of the suit, playing a lower one not in sequence with such best card, on the chance that the intermediate card is in the hand of the second

player; in the case of a finesse against two cards, such as the finesse of the knave, holding ace, knave, on the chance that the intermediate cards, one or both of them, are with the second player. There is therefore no finesse against a hand which has none of the suit, or which plainly does not hold the intermediate card or cards against which you would finesse. This caution equally applies to the second player, who, though not so frequently as the third, has many opportunities of using a finesse to advantage.

FOURTH HAND.

Of the fourth player there is little to be said here except that it is his business to take the trick if he can, unless it is already his partner's, and, if he cannot do so, to throw away his lowest card.

In this position you should especially bear in mind that it is wrong to give away a trick without a very strong probability, almost a certainty, of making two tricks by your forbearance. Many players, if they hold the ace, knave, and others, of a suit of which the adversary leads the king, invariably forbear to take the trick, in the expectation that the leader will continue the suit in which they then hold the perfect tenace. It is a

bad and dangerous practice, which I cannot recommend to you, except you have some special reason for it. Your partner, believing the ace to be against him, will trump the next round, if he can. The leader's partner may have but one of the suit, which, if it is continued, he will trump, and your ace will probably never make a trick. You give up, for one round at least, the great advantage of getting the lead. The leader, either from suspecting your tactics, or because he has another strong suit to show his partner, changes his lead, and when the suit is next led it is probably by your right-hand adversary, who leads through your tenace, instead of to it. In the mean time you may have upset the general scheme of your partner's game by leading him to believe that the whole of this suit is against him. And what have you gained by your ingenuity? If you play in the simple way, and take the king with the ace, you will equally remain with the knave the best card of the suit in its third round, if the second round is led by the original leader, or if it is returned to him by his partner, unless he has the opportunity, and avails himself of it, of finessing a ten. The chance of your partner playing this suit up to its original leader is so small as not to be worth consideration. He will

not do so if he has any thing else to do; but, such as the chance is, it tells against this practice, which is rarely advisable unless you are very strong in trumps. In this case not only is it allowable to run risks which should be otherwise avoided, but also your forbearance may tempt the adversary to lead trumps. This is more especially the case if one strong suit has been previously declared against you. Your adversary, who then believes that he and his partner hold at least the tierce major in a second suit, will not unfrequently be induced to lead a trump.

The foregoing caution is applicable also to the second player; who, however, under the circumstances described, may pass a king with a somewhat less risk than is incurred by the fourth player; for, if the suit is continued, he takes the second trick in it with his knave, and undeceives his partner at once.

There are occasionally cases in which it becomes plain that the fourth hand must not take the trick. I will put the most obvious, reminding you that the case is the same with every similar combination of the cards.

As fourth player you have three cards left in your hand, the king, the ten, and a small card, of a suit of which the leader has led the queen, and

you know him also to hold the knave and the nine. These are the only cards left of the suit, which we will suppose to be trumps, or, which comes to the same thing, that the trumps have all been played. It is clear that, if you take the queen with your king, you only make one trick with your three cards, as the knave and nine will lie behind your ten and small card. It is equally clear that, if you refuse to win the queen, and play your small card, you will make two tricks out of the three, as the knave and nine must then be led up to your king and ten.

There are also some cases in which the fourth player should take a trick which already belongs to his partner. Here again I will put a very obvious combination, leaving it to practice to show you others of a similar character.

You have the ace and a small card of a suit, and two or three losing cards, which you know that your partner cannot win. He, as second player, has taken the trick in the suit of which you hold the ace and a small one, and you know that he can have nothing but that suit to play. If you do not take that trick from him, you will be forced to take the next trick with your ace, and have nothing left for it but to play your losing cards and to submit to the loss of the remaining

tricks; but if you take his trick with your ace, and return to him the small card, you give him the opportunity of a finesse, when he will probably make two, or, it may be, all the tricks in the suit. If he can only make one, you have lost nothing by taking this chance.

INTERMEDIATE SEQUENCES.

An intermediate sequence is one which is neither at the head nor at the bottom of a suit. Thus, a suit of ace, queen, knave, ten, and a small card, contains an intermediate sequence. The way to play this suit, as also one containing a tierce to a knave, has been shown before; but some ingenious players have endeavored to create a system for playing suits containing small intermediate sequences, such as a tierce to a ten, to a nine, or to an eight, &c.

Take some such suit as this,—king, nine, eight, seven, and four. They say that it is not right, in such cases as this, to play the lowest of the suit, but the lowest of the sequence, lest the first trick should be made against them by a very small card. They commence, then, with the seven. On the second round, unless called on to take or attempt to take the trick, they throw the four.

I cannot give my adhesion to this doctrine.

My partner leads the seven, and I or the adversary take the first trick, and continue the suit, when my partner throws the four. I can only believe that he has led the best card of a weak suit. I perhaps refrain, in consequence, from leading trumps, which I might otherwise have done, and I miscalculate his hand in many ways. The third round, to which they must of necessity play a higher card than that first led, will, they say, undeceive me. But in the mean time all the mischief may have been done. I may have led the third round in the hope of forcing my partner, and I have forced the adversary instead; or I may have changed the whole scheme of my game.

But they say, perhaps, that to the second round of the suit they would play the eight, and not the four; and this appears to me to be less objectionable. In this way they at least do not deceive me as to their having led from a strong suit. Yet still they have concealed from me one card, the four, which I shall believe to be in an adversary's hand, and which, not having been played by either adversary, may readily lead me to the conclusion that one of them has asked for a trump. The least evil is that I miscount the hand which I cannot believe to contain the four.

These disadvantages, tending as they do to mystify the game, appear to me to more than counterbalance the small advantage of making sure that the first trick is not given away to a very small card. The intermediate sequence, however, of ten, nine, and eight, is of sufficient importance to justify this system of play in critical positions, but by no means as a general rule.

The foregoing rules will be found easily intelligible, and not too great a tax on the memory, if the learner will be at the trouble of placing before him the cards named in the different cases given to him. Without this precaution, the enumeration of a variety of cards confuses the mind and presents no picture to the eye.

CHAPTER II.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOOD PLAYERS.

If my reader took up this volume as a beginner, I venture to hope that he has carefully studied and understood the preceding chapter. If so, and if he has played in accordance with its advice for at least a few months, he is now a good whist-player, and there is some presumption in addressing to him further advice. For it depends on himself—his inclination, leisure, and opportunities—whether or not he makes further progress, and takes his place in the first class of those who find amusement in this beautiful game. His own observation in a month, if he is a careful observer, will be worth more to him than all he could read in a year, and each day will reveal to him some new combination or subtlety of his art. What more I have to say is therefore chiefly in the way of suggestion, which may improve the general scheme of his play.

Whist, as played by its best players, has much

changed in its general features during the last thirty years. When I first remember it, its great celebrities were, for the most part, men whose early education had been at the old game, or long whist. They were on the whole, I think, more accurate and careful than we are now-a-days, and, it may be, greater masters of their art in its details; but, whether from the traditions of their early training, or from other circumstances, they were wanting in the dash and brilliancy which distinguish the best modern players, and sinned, to my mind, by what we now call a backward game.

I remember, as a youngster, being told by one of the highest authorities, on the occasion of my having led a single trump from a hand of great strength in all the other suits, that the only justification for leading a singleton in trumps was the holding at least ace and king in the three remaining suits. He spoke the opinion of his school. That school, I am inclined to believe, might teach us much that we have neglected; but I should pick out of it one man alone, the celebrated Major Aubrey, as likely to be very formidable among the best players of the present day. He was a player of great original genius,

and refused strict adherence to the over-careful system to which his companions were slaves.

But whist had travelled, and thirty or more years ago we began to hear of the great Paris whist-players. They sometimes came among us; more frequently our champions encountered them on their own ground, and returned to us with a system modified, if not improved, by their French experience. For our neighbors, accurate, logical, and original thinkers, had not been content to imitate our system,—perhaps their opportunities of doing so were too few,—but had created a system of their own, which had the advantage of being but little influenced by the traditions of long whist,—a game never very fashionable or carefully studied in Paris. We were forced to recognize a wide difference between their system and our own; and "the French game" became the scorn and the horror of the old school, which went gradually to its grave with an unchanged faith, and in the firm belief that the invaders, with their rash trump leading, were all mad, and that their great master Deschapelles—the finest whist-player beyond any comparison the world has ever seen—was a dangerous lunatic. The new school, however, as I well remember, were found to be winning players.

It is not very easy to give an accurate definition in a small compass of the rival systems; and that which I shall attempt must be taken with some allowance for the necessary exaggeration of the caution of the one and the rashness of the other.

The English player of the old school never thought of winning the game until he saw that it was saved.

The French player never thought of saving the game until he saw that he could not win it.

The former, therefore, saved very many games which his rival would have lost; but the latter won a much greater number, which English caution would have missed winning, and would have stopped at the score of three or four, if not less. If forced to take my choice between these systems, carried to their extreme, I should without hesitation prefer the game of rash attack to that of over-cautious defence; but I am not so forced, and recommend a middle course, leaning, however, more nearly to the new than to the old doctrine.

Thus, with any thing like a fair chance of winning the game from the beginning, it is right to run no little risk to seize the opportunity which may not occur again.

Let us take an example. The game is at its

beginning, and a small card has been turned up. I hold the queen, knave, and two small trumps, tierce to a knave and a small card in the second suit, queen, knave, and a small card in the third, and a guarded king in the fourth. With this, which is not very great strength, or with any hand of a similar character, I believe it so important to find out whether my partner has a third honor, and whether consequently I may play to win the game, that I unhesitatingly lead a small trump. If I find him very weak, I have no doubt played to a disadvantage, and must change my attack to defence, making the best of my hand, which would probably have been more profitably commenced by the knave from my tierce. But if my partner has one honor, and a trump to return to me, with only one strong suit, to which he, by the card which he throws to the third round of trumps, and the adversary, by his lead, will direct me, we shall very probably win the game, or at least be very close to it. The player of the old school would have opened the hand with a tierce to a knave, as exposing him to the least danger.

I have only taken this hand as no unfair instance of a very large number of similar combinations, which illustrate the difference between

backward and forward play, to the advantage, in my belief, of the latter.

But those who do me the honor to follow my advice must always be ready to change their tactics at once if their attack fails, and must remember that it is useless to persist playing a strong game with resources already weakened by failure. They will probably have lost something, but they will have taken a chance well worth the price they have paid for it.

No mistake is more common or more fatal than that, having seen with good reason, at the outset of a hand, the promise of a great score, the player does not yield soon enough to indications that that promise was fallacious, but obstinately pursues his first idea.

The following case is a very singular illustration of this danger:—

I dealt, and turned up a queen, along with which I held two small trumps. My partner—nor was he a bad player—held the ace and four of the smallest trumps, and, so to speak, the whole of another suit. With this strength, assisted by my queen, he promised himself, reasonably enough, a great score, if not the whole game. But the first two tricks showed him that he would be over-trumped. He should have submitted to

this, and, as it happened, he would have made a good score; but he was unable to dismiss the idea of a strong attack. He trumped the second trick with his ace, led a trump, and we made no other trick. Thus with ace, queen, eight trumps, five of which were in one hand, between us, we lost twelve tricks out of the thirteen. It may interest a learner, and he will find it very easy, to place the cards so that this shall be possible.

I may have said elsewhere, but I am not afraid to repeat it, that the best whist-player is he who plays the game in the simplest way, and who always bears in mind the great maxim that it is of more importance to give information to his partner than to deceive his adversary. And this is all the more important when it is remembered that the same players, generally speaking, are always playing together. If I am thrown among players of whom I know nothing, I feel that I play to a great disadvantage. I am like a boy on the first day of going to a new school, not knowing whom to like, whom to trust, and whom to distrust,—from whom to expect assistance and honest advice, or from whom to dread a hoax. I must trust, like him, to the quickness of my observation to acquire the information which is necessary to my success. But when I know my

players, I value him the most who never deceives me, and whose unvarying certainty enables me, as it were, to play his cards with almost the same knowledge of them as I have of my own.

Let us take an instance or two. I have laid down a rule—it is no invention of mine, but is given, I think, in the old works of Hoyle, or Matthews, or both, and was decided to be right after some controversy among the chief Graham's players many years ago—that with a tierce to a king in any suit, it is only right to commence with the knave when you hold at least five of the suit. Nothing, however, is more common, even among very fair players, than to commence with the knave, holding this tierce alone, or with one other card only. It is a grave error, and I refuse to consider any man, whoever he may be, a fine whist-player who commits it. He has not understood the immense advantage which it is to me, not in that suit only, but ranging over the whole of the hand, to know, as if I saw it, that when he commences a tierce to a king with the knave, he has at least five cards in the suit. But perhaps he thinks the rule a bad one. Be it so; though I differ from him, my objection still remains in full force. The rule is known and observed by the best players; and he, for some

crochet of his own, has refused me the information which I have a right to expect from him, and which, in the last few cards of the hand, will very probably make the difference of my knowing, or being ignorant, whether I can win or save the game.

Again, I have laid down the following rule, on which I always act. As second player, holding king second, if a small card is led, play your king in trumps, and your small card in the other suits. My reason for this is as follows: good players in the common suits generally avoid leading from an ace suit; they keep their ace, if possible, as being almost as good as a trump to bring in their strong suit. The ace, therefore, in this case will generally be behind you, either with the third player or with your partner, and your king would be played to a loss, or to little use. But trumps are led from great strength in the suit, and as the ace is the strongest card, you may expect in the majority of cases that it is in the hand of the leader, and that your king will make the trick. My reasons may not convince you in this, which has always been a vexed question; but, unless there is some very obvious reason why it is of vital importance to me to get the lead, my partner at least knows when I play the king second hand,

not being trumps, that I either hold the ace, with or without others, or no other card of the suit, and I have given him information which may be of great value to him. If you object to my rule, take the other course, and always play your king. It is better for you to be uniformly wrong than to be sometimes right and sometimes wrong, and to leave your partner in constant uncertainty as to the state of your hand.

Take, as a third instance, another rule. With ace and small cards, do not commence with your ace, unless you have five or more cards in the suit. I have said elsewhere that the French do not observe this, but play out the ace with four of the suit. As to this difference, there is much to be said on both sides; but I prefer our rule. However this may be, give me the partner who invariably observes the rule, and who, by this constant observance, shows me, when he plays out the ace, and follows it by a small card, that, unless he has that small card only, or the queen and two other smaller cards, of which the fall of the cards will almost always inform me, he holds three other cards in the suit. If I am not to get this partner, give me next the player who always plays out the ace with three small cards. He plays wrong to my thinking, but he does not de-

ceive me, for I know his practice; nor does he puzzle me by playing sometimes in one way, sometimes in the other.

FALSE CARDS.

It almost follows from what I have said above, that I hold in abhorrence the playing false cards. I freely admit that to this practice there is great and frequent temptation, and I find it accordingly to be chiefly the vice of the very young or the very old whist-player. Youth is too careless, and old age too feeble, to resist. I am not surprised at this, for there is great enjoyment, when your trick succeeds, in having taken in your adversary, and having won the applause of an ignorant gallery; while if you have played in the commonplace way, even your partner scarcely thanks you. You have done your duty,—nothing more,—and he had a right to expect it of you; but he will trust you another time. Do not deceive him.

You have ace and king of a suit, and you take the trick with your ace. This is probably in your adversary's suit, for you would hardly think it right to deceive me in my own, but you cannot resist the temptation of taking in your opponent. What is it that you have done? You have told me, as plainly as whist language can speak, that

you do not hold the king. In no other position in life would you tell me that which is untrue. What sufficient object do you propose to yourself by doing so in this instance?

It is true that every now and then you will gain an advantage over the adversary, but the disadvantage to me is certain and invariable. I must play all the worse for being blindfolded. Perhaps I fear to lead trumps, because I believe that the suit in question is wholly in the possession of my adversaries; I should have led them if I had thought it possible that you could protect me in that suit, and you have injured the whole scheme of my game, or it may be that I am sorely put to it to find one trick in your hand with which to save the game. Be sure that the last suit in which I shall look for it will be that in which you have told me that you were unable to win, say a knave or a ten, at a cheaper price than your ace. Again, believing that the king is held by my opponents, and being probably able to say in which of their hands it ought to be, I miscount the numerical strength of all the players in all the suits, until, at last, I find that my partner has paid me the ill compliment of believing that I am likely to play as well with my eyes shut as open. I shall surely remember this,

and the bad effect of your deceit is not confined to the particular hand I have spoken of. It unfavorably affects our interests, when we are partners, for many a long day. Until you have radically cured yourself of this error, and redeemed your character for straightforwardness by a long course of intelligible play, I shall distrust you, and shall never feel sure when you take a low card with the ace, that you have not concealed from me the king.

Let me take one more instance, as a type of a very large class of cases which illustrate the danger of false cards.

You hold, say, the nine, ten, and an honor in trumps, and, having to trump a trick, without any risk of being over-trumped, you trump with your ten. Your idea is that your adversary, who has shown no disposition to lead trumps, will force you again, in the belief that he will thus take an honor out of your hand. The opportunity does not arise, and we arrive at the last four or five cards of the hand. In most cases, by this time, counting the cards I know you to hold, and making allowance for those which I know you cannot have, I also know that you must hold, say, two trumps, and no more. You have already trumped with the ten, therefore

your two remaining trumps ought to be two honors. I play in the certainty that this is so, and I find that one of them is the nine.

Perhaps you will tell me, as I have been told by gentlemen with whom I frequently play, "I should never have played such and such a card" (a false one) "if I had had you for my partner." I feel much obliged to you. You and I shall probably win together; but why should you give cause of complaint to your other partners? They must be very bad indeed if they do not suffer by it.

I do not, however, go the length of saying that false cards should never be played; but I prescribe to myself, and advise to you, the following limits to the practice.

With a partner so bad that no regularity in your play conveys to him any information, while he constantly misleads you as to the state of his own hand, all that is left to you is to confuse your adversaries as much as you can, and you will do well to play false cards on every opportunity.

Another exception to my principle, and a somewhat similar one, is, when you have found your partner so miserably weak in cards all

round, that you can do him no harm by deceiving him.

In the last three or four cards of the hand false cards may often be played with great effect, and with no risk. The great scheme of the hand cannot be affected by them. Rightly or wrongly, it has been settled and acted on long before. You are approaching closely the final result, which you can more or less foresee. At least you probably know thus much, that if your partner holds one particular card, of which you are doubtful, the result you desire is attained under any circumstances; and that if he holds it not, you can do him no harm by deceiving him. In such cases as this you may often play a false card with advantage. You may deceive your adversary, and cannot injure your partner.

Lastly, there are not unfrequent occasions when a card is a false one as against your opponents, but not as against your partner, who knows, or ought to know, that you have the card which you have concealed. In these cases it is obvious that the false card may be played, if you have a partner on whose intelligence you can depend.

Practice and observation will show you, moreover, that when playing against a skilful oppo-

nent, who carefully notes the smallest cards, and more especially when your partner, though a tolerable player, does not pay attention to those which seem of little consequence, you may often gain an advantage, generally in that opponent's suit, by playing false cards of a low denomination. Say that you have some such suit as this: the ace, nine, eight, and six. Your right-hand adversary commences with the king, from a king-queen suit, or even with the knave from a suit of tierce to a king and two small cards. You may fairly expect to make two tricks in the suit, or at least to defend it; that is, to hold the second best card in it, guarded after two rounds. You take the first trick in this suit with your ace, and when the second round is led you throw your eight. If in these two rounds the seven falls, your six and your nine are equal cards; and if the ten (which will generally be the case if the leader held originally five of the suit, the ten not being one of them) has fallen also, your nine and six defend the suit, in which I suppose the original leader to retain an honor and two very small cards. He is often puzzled how to proceed, and may easily be in doubt as to the position of the six. He either has to change his lead, or if he continues it and plays out his honor, it is trumped,

while your fourth card imprisons his remaining two. Some such false cards as this are justifiable under the circumstances I have supposed, more especially if you have a very weak hand, when you should be careful not to get rid of even the lowest card in your adversary's strong suit, if you originally held four of it. Observation will show you how very frequently even the very low cards, in the suit against you, become of great value after two or three rounds. This style of play will often be of service in trumps. In the other suits you must be careful that your partner does not mistake your tactics, and believe that you are asking for trumps. Indeed, you will rarely be quite safe from this danger unless you know that he has no trump to lead you, or have no cause for fear if he does lead one.

If any are inclined to enlarge the limits for playing false cards which I have ventured to lay down, let them at least remember that the more skilful their partner the more dangerous it is to deceive him, and that the most fatal false cards are those which, being of value, and being played early in the hand, are likely to affect its general scheme. French players are dangerously addicted to false cards; and the Americans rarely play the right card if they have one to play which is likely

to deceive everybody. They play for their own hands alone,—the worst fault I know in a whist-player.

UNDER-PLAY.

The meaning of the above term will be best understood by taking a case.

You hold ace, knave, and one or more small cards of a suit, not being trumps, and you are the fourth to play. The third hand plays the nine, which you take with your knave, retaining the ace, and one or more small cards. It is almost certain that your partner holds either the king or the queen, more probably the latter, for the leader has not both, or he would have led one of them, and his partner ought not to have either. If, therefore, you play your smallest card on the chance that your partner may make the trick, you have "under-played" the original leader. This move will often gain a trick. Your partner may hold the king, not improbably single, in which case it would have fallen had you played your ace; or he may hold the queen, which he will make, if the king is not put up, as is likely, especially if, along with his king, the original leader holds the ten.

The following case, and others similar to it,

may be considered to be "under-play," though not coming under that name so exactly as the preceding. You hold the king, with two or more small cards, and are the fourth to play. The leader has led a small card, and his partner, having taken the trick with the ace, returns the lead. You hold up your king, and play a small card, on the chance that your partner may win the trick. This he is very likely to do, unless the original leader holds both queen and knave. For, believing the king, which you have held up, to be behind him, he will finesse a ten, if he has it, or even a nine, rather than play his queen to what appears certain destruction.

The above are sufficient illustrations of a "ruse" with which you are no doubt familiar, and which is infinite in the number and variety of its combinations. It is a very obvious one, and therefore a favorite with moderate players, who rarely lose an occasion of employing it. Yet it should be used sparingly and with care, and with such considerations as the following always present to your mind.

"Solve senescentem." A trick too often played is suspected and defeated.

In trumps this manœuvre, like all others, is

much more justifiable than in the common suits, in which it is dangerous.

A good player is likely to suspect you, if you immediately return his suit through him, of holding up its master card, on the chance of your partner holding the third best. Suspecting you, he will at once put up his best card, if the second best left in, and the best card, which you have thus held up, will very probably be trumped in the third round. The original leader is more likely to defeat you in this manner, if along with his best card, the second best of the suit left in, he holds no other card of sufficient value to have a chance of drawing the best card from your partner, if he holds it. In this case, it is clear that the only chance of making the second best card is that the best is in your hand. Thus, if the original leader, in the first case which I gave, led from king and three small cards, he will, if you attempt to under-play him, put up his king, for he has scarce any other chance of making it. If, along with his king, he held the ten and others, the nine and knave having been played in the first round, he will most probably try his ten, in the hope that it may draw the ace.

If it is dangerous to risk under-play with a good player, it is equally so with a very bad one,

who, as good old Matthews says, never finesses when he ought to do so.

You will also do well to remember that you are much less likely to be suspected of under-play if you wait a few rounds, and do not at once return your adversary's lead through him, and up to his partner's known weakness. If you have a good suit of your own, play it. When it is partially played out, if you again come into the lead, you may under-play your adversary with much less fear of detection, for it is supposed that, having done the best with your own strong cards, you see nothing better to do than to lead up to the weakness of your right-hand adversary; and if, in the mean time, that right-hand adversary has got the lead, and has returned his partner's suit, you have in no way lost the opportunity for your under-play, if you choose to risk it. You may equally, indeed with much less chance of being detected, hold up your ace as second player in the second round, and the original leader of the suit, now third to play, will be equally puzzled whether to play his king or to finesse a lower card, on the chance of drawing the ace, which he believes to be in your partner's hand.

Subject to these considerations, your own ex-

perience will show you that, used sparingly and with judgment, under-play is a formidable weapon, though often foiled by the very good, and useless against the bad, player. Extremes meet in whist as elsewhere, and it may be observed of all the subtle artifices of the game, that they are employed with much more effect against an indifferent or even a moderate player than against a man who knows every thing or one who knows nothing of the game. The former avoids your snare, the latter does not see it. It is of little use to dig a pitfall for a blind man, who is as likely to walk on one side of it, or on the other, or not to walk that way at all. But the man of imperfect sight, if your trap is temptingly baited, and lies in his path, is pretty sure to tumble headlong into it. "A little learning" is indeed a dangerous thing at our game. Better far to know nothing, and to play your cards like the blind man. You mystify alike your adversaries and your partner, you turn the game upside down, reduce it to one of chance, and in the scramble may have as good a chance as your neighbors. But if you have learned enough to be an indifferent player, for your own sake study and improve, or, if you play with even fairly good players, you will to a certainty be a loser.

THE FINESSE.

So much might be said on this head,—so infinite are the varieties of the finesse,—so many and so complicated the considerations which make it right or wrong,—that an attempt to exhaust the subject would equally exhaust the reader and confuse his ideas. In the impossibility of writing enough, I have long doubted whether it would not be better to write nothing, and to leave this—the most interesting part of the game—entirely to the acuteness and practised observation of the student. I will, however, offer to him some observations for his guidance, and may best carry out my intention by dividing the finesse (which, however, might readily be still further divided) under two chief heads, viz., the Finesse Speculative and the Finesse Obligatory.

THE FINESSE SPECULATIVE.

The simplest form of finesse is when you hold the ace and queen, or the ace, with the queen led by your partner, and endeavor to gain the trick by playing your own queen, or passing your partner's, speculating that the king, if not in your partner's hand, is in that of your right-hand ad-

versary. This finesse is almost always right, and you cannot lose by making it, unless the king is single with your left-hand adversary. This is a finesse against one card, but you may occasionally finesse against two cards, or even more, either in the trump suit, or sometimes without great risk in the other suits, when the trumps are exhausted, and you have little cause to fear winning cards being brought in against you, which otherwise would not have been made. Thus, with ace, knave, ten, and one or two others in trumps, I cannot think it wrong, unless there is obvious reason for making sure of two rounds in the suit, to finesse the ten. It is a finesse against two cards, the king and the queen; but unless both these cards are with your left-hand adversary, you have preserved to yourself the tenace. Again, your partner may hold an honor, in which case your finesse is only against one card. If an honor is turned up to your right, you would certainly do well to finesse your ten with ace, knave, ten. Even your nine with ace, ten, nine, and another, especially when the score tells you that your partner must have an honor or the game is lost. This last finesse is more advisable if the honor turned up is a king or a queen, as also if you have reason

to believe that your partner has one or more cards of re-entry, enabling him to repeat his lead.

I have spoken of the finesse in the high cards, but it must be remembered that, when these have been played out, the finesse of the lowest cards, say, of the five, with the five and the seven, against the six, is as valuable as that of the queen, from ace, queen, against the king. When you have got thus deep into a suit, you will, moreover, generally find, if you are a careful observer, many indications which will inform you whether the finesse in the last cards of a suit can be made with little or no risk.

You will also do well to bear in mind that it is better to finesse in your adversary's suit than in that of your partner, who should be trusted with the conduct of his own strength, and that you should run but very little risk for the sake of a finesse the success of which will only leave you at the score of four instead of three, while its failure will leave you at the score of two instead of three, which in this case I suppose it to be in your power to reach. As the converse of this, you are right in running a greater risk in a finesse the success of which will leave you at the score of three while its failure still gives you the odd trick. *A fortiori*, it is unpardonable careless-

ness, if you hold the winning card, to finesse when one trick wins the game.

Even when one trick saves the game, finesse should be rejected, unless you feel sure, either from your own or your partner's hand, that there is no danger.

In order to finesse, it is not necessary that you should hold the best, and third or fourth best, &c., of a suit. Finesse is possible, and may be forced on you, with almost any combination of cards, sequences excepted. Say with king, knave against the queen, the ace being in, or with queen, ten against the knave, the ace and king being both in, or with combinations of less importance.

Lastly, I would offer the following opinions—not, I fancy, very generally entertained—for the consideration of experienced players. With ordinary hands, finesse may be deep at their commencement, should contract as they go on, until in the last four or five cards there is scarcely any opportunity left for finesse, properly so called.

When weak in trumps,—say even with no trumps at all,—finesse deeply in the suit in which you believe your partner to be weak, in order, as long as you can, to protect him from a force. Take some such hand as this: ace, queen, ten,

and a small card, or ace, knave, ten, and a small card. The partner leads the nine. Many a time and oft have I seen the ace put up, and the delinquent has excused himself by saying that he was so weak in trumps that he was afraid to finesse. To my mind he would have been wrong in simply finessing his queen. In either case he should have passed the nine. I, of course, suppose him not to have any certain tricks, which he can play out, in the other suits.

THE FINESSE OBLIGATORY.

An example or two will suffice to explain the above term, and to indicate the many cases in which you are so far obliged to finesse, that you may gain and cannot lose by it unless the hand has been played in some unusual and almost impossible manner. You lead from a suit of queen, ten, and others. Your partner takes the trick with the king, and returns your lead with a small card. You now know that the ace is behind you. Your partner has it not, or he would have led it. Your right-hand adversary has it not, or he would not have allowed your partner's king to make. You are obliged to finesse your ten. If the ace and the knave both lie behind you, it cannot be helped, and, in whatever way you play,

both cards will make against you. But if the knave is with your right-hand adversary, your ten will draw the ace, and your queen gives you the command of the suit.

The following case is as nearly as possible similar. You lead from king, ten, and small cards, your partner takes with the queen, and returns a small card. You know the ace to be behind you; and here again, therefore, you must finesse your ten.

Again, say that you have led from king, nine, and small cards, and that your partner, having taken with the queen, returns to you the eight. If you have studied the former chapter of this treatise, you know that he has returned to you the best card he holds in the suit, and that you have to contend not only against the ace, which you know to be behind you, but against the knave and the ten, neither of which cards can be with your partner. The position is difficult, but there is no help for it. You must pass your partner's eight. It is a finesse against two cards, but one or possibly both of them may be with your right-hand adversary, in each of which cases you will have played to advantage, and even in the worst case, viz., that you find both knave and ten, along with the ace, behind you,

you have yet retained your king guarded, and have not given up the entire command of the suit.

This leads to the consideration of another numerous class of cases, which, although not unsimilar, cannot strictly be called finesse. Take the same cards as given in the last example. Your partner equally takes with the queen and returns the eight, but your right-hand adversary renounces the suit. You now know that the ace, ten, and knave are all three behind you, and it is true that there is no finesse against a hand which has none of the suit played. Still, you would be very wrong to play your king. You must pass your partner's eight, and you still hold your king guarded, which prevents your left-hand adversary from going on with the suit without either giving up its command or forcing his partner. Your king thus guarded may still be of great value to you, as your partner will certainly not continue the suit, and your right-hand adversary cannot. To have played your king would have given the entire command of the suit to your left-hand adversary, than which no position could be worse. Cases similar to this are of frequent occurrence, and should be treated on this principle.

WHEN TO DISREGARD RULE.

Rules are for the majority of cases, not for exceptional positions, and a player is good, very good, or of the highest class, in proportion to the rapidity and acuteness with which he seizes the occasions when rule must be disregarded. These occasions are so many, and so different, that practice and very accurate observation can alone master them. If, then, I give an example or two of departure from rule, it is in illustration of my meaning, and as suggestion, and not in the vain effort to exhaust a subject which is infinite, or to lay down any fixed principle for that which escapes from rule and defies routine.

It often happens that in order to save the game it is necessary that you should make a certain number of tricks out of the cards remaining unplayed. Perhaps you must make them all. You see that in order to do this your partner must hold certain cards, or that certain other cards must be in the hands of your adversaries, favorably placed for a finesse. The case may be so desperate that, for the desired result, it may be necessary to place almost all the cards remaining in the three hands unknown to you. You do not know whether they are so placed, but you do

know that, if they are not, your game is lost. Your first consideration must now be, whether there is more than one possible combination of the cards by which the required result can be obtained. If so, you choose the least improbable, *i.e.* that which necessitates the placing of the smallest number of unknown cards. Having made your choice, if there is a choice, or having seized the one chance, if there is but one, rule no longer exists, and you must play as if you saw the cards in their required position, lying faces upward on the table before you. The success of your acuteness may not be frequent, for in an intricate combination the chances will, of course, generally defeat you, and you may feel that, after all your pains, the difference between a merely good player and yourself is practically very slight; but when the position of the cards favors you, and the chance which you have foreseen comes off, you will be well repaid by a pleasant recollection of your skill for many a long day, and by the consciousness that you take rank among the masters of the game.

Let me take a tolerably obvious example, because it is obvious and fresh in my memory, and not as being an unusually fine *coup*, for any good player would have played in the same way.

There are five cards in hand, and four trumps only remain in. Of these I hold the tenace,—call it ace and queen; and I know that my right-hand adversary holds the remaining two,—call them king and knave. He also holds a thirteenth card of another suit. My remaining cards are the ace, king, and a small card of another suit. I know nothing more of the position of the cards, but, in order to save the game, it is necessary for me to make every trick, and it is my lead.

Place these cards before you, and you will see that, if I play, in the ordinary way, my ace and king, I have lost the game, as my right-hand adversary must make one trick.

There is but one chance for me, viz., to put my partner into the lead, when, if he has the best cards of the fourth suit, I shall throw away on them my ace and king of diamonds, remaining with my tenace of trumps, or if my right-hand adversary should trump this fourth suit, I overtrump him, draw his other trump, and make my ace and king, in either case, winning the required five tricks.

I therefore play my small card. This *coup* came off, my partner made the trick, and held the two best cards in the fourth suit, which he

very properly played. The combination is, comparatively with many others, a simple one, yet it serves to illustrate my meaning, as it necessitated, as the one single possibility of saving the game, the favorable event of four chances. My partner must be able to win the first trick, he must hold at least two winning cards in the fourth suit, and my right-hand adversary must hold at least one of my suit.

Take another example. Some such case is not very uncommon. Your adversaries are very strong in trumps. They have commenced with three rounds of them, making the three first tricks, having four by honors, and having three trumps yet left, all three in the same hand. It is clear that if they can make one trick only in the other suits, their game is won. You now win the fourth trick, and find yourself with one strong suit, say an ace, queen, ten, or an ace, king, knave, or ten suit, and with no strength whatever in the remaining two suits.

Your first consideration will be that your partner must be strong in your weak suits. He need not have the whole of them, for, if he is led to, more than once, successful finesse in them may enable him to make all the tricks, although even two honors in one, or both, of them, may be

against him to his right. If you play your strong suit, you part with the possibility of getting the lead, and leading to your partner the suits in which, in order to save the game, he must be strong. You should, therefore, lead to him whichever of your two weak suits appears the more advantageous. He will finesse, deeply, for the case is desperate, and if he succeeds, he will, if he is a fine player, act on the same principle which dictated your play, and will lead to you his weak suit, which, of course, is your strong one. You finesse in your turn, lead to him again in a weak suit, and wait for him again to lead to your strength. You may readily be able to lead to him three times in this way. Both his tricks and yours will, at some time or other, be trumped, but for this you are prepared, and it cannot be helped, as there are three trumps against you in one hand which must make. When your adversary trumps, he must lead up to you or your partner. I have seen many a desperate game saved in this way; and, as few things are less intelligible than an intricate combination merely described as above, I will place the cards in an order which will explain my meaning and enable you to play the hand with a successful result.

Your hand is marked 1, your left-hand adversary 2, and so on.

1. Two small spades (trumps), ace, king, knave, ten in clubs. Ten and three small diamonds. Nine and two small hearts.

2. Ace, king, and one small trump. Two small clubs. King, knave, and two small hearts. King, knave, and two small diamonds.

3. Two small trumps. Three small clubs. Ace, queen, ten and eight in hearts. Ace, queen, and two small diamonds.

4. Tierce to a queen and three small trumps. Queen, nine, eight and one small club. Two small hearts. The nine in diamonds.

4 commences and leads his queen of trumps, which makes, and he follows it with the knave. This his partner is obliged to win with the king, and, in order to draw as many trumps as he can, he plays out his ace. Both you and your partner renounce, he discarding a small club, and you a small diamond, for a reason to be given hereafter. It is now clear that as 4 holds three more trumps, you must make every trick in the other suits, in order to save the game.

2 still remains with the lead, and following your discard, also because his diamonds are as strong as his hearts, he leads a small diamond, on

which his partner can only put the nine, won by your ten. If you play out your clubs, which is your only strong suit, you have lost the game. But as your partner must be strong in hearts, and as you do not wish to help to establish the diamonds of your opponents, you play your nine of hearts, which he passes. You continue the suit, he takes the trick and leads you a club, when you finesse your ten, continue the heart, and the rest of the hand plays itself. You have made your seven tricks.

If you are asked why you originally discarded a diamond, when you held ten four in that suit, and only nine three in hearts, your reason is that in this exceptional case it is better for you to retain, in each of your weak suits, the power of leading, as often as there may be occasion, to your partner.

In such cases as these, the play I have advised is still more necessary if the trumps remaining in against you are to your left hand. For if you have all the best cards of a suit, and your partner some small cards in it, so that you are sure to force the strong hand, yet he, when forced, of necessity leads through your partner, and up to the suits in which you have nothing, which is a more disadvantageous position than if your part-

ner is led up to by you or by his other adversary.

Like the examples which I have given before, the above is a very obvious one, but the student, if inclined, may easily put together others of more complication.

Towards the close of a hand—say in the last four cards—it not unfrequently becomes clear that only two tricks can be made in a suit as yet unplayed, inasmuch as the two last trumps, or the last trump and a thirteenth card, are both in one hand. In such a case as this, if your four cards should all be in the unplayed suit,—say a queen, or a knave, and three small cards,—you must consider this as if it were a weak suit of two cards, and lead your queen, or your knave, as the case may be.

LE GRAND COUP.

Among the most interesting combinations in which rule must be disregarded, that which Deschappelles has named "le grand coup" occupies the first place. He had a good right to be its godfather, for if any one before him had practised it, no one certainly had reduced it to any thing like a system, nor has it been employed before or since his time with such frequency or acuteness as he displayed.

Le grand coup consists in getting rid of a superfluous trump. Every one who has played whist much must have observed the not unfrequent occasions when a player has found himself, probably in the last three cards of the hand, with a trump too many. He has been obliged to trump his partner's trick, to take the lead himself, and to lead from his tenace, instead of being led to, by which a trick is lost. The triumph of the great whist-player is to foresee this position, and to take an opportunity of getting rid of this inconvenient trump, which may be done either by under-trumping the adversary when you cannot over-trump him, or by trumping your partner's trick when you hold a losing card, with which you know you can again give him the lead if you wish to do so. I have known Deschappelles, and not unfrequently, to foresee this difficulty, and defend himself against it, many tricks before it was established, or at all apparent to any one else.

I will give the simplest example of le grand coup, in a combination of which every good player would take advantage. Place the following hands before you with four cards in each, leaving out hand No. 2, your left-hand adversary, which has nothing to do with the play.

1. Ace, queen, and a small club (trumps), one losing spade.

3. The winning heart, and the winning spade, with any other two cards not being trumps.

4. King, knave of clubs (trumps), a losing heart, and a losing spade.

Your hand is No. 1, and I suppose you to know that the king and knave of trumps lie with your right-hand adversary, and that there are no trumps left in, except those held by him and you.

3. Your partner has the lead, and leads the winning heart. If on this you throw your losing spade, you will only make three tricks, for you will be obliged to take the next trick, and lead from your tenace, when your right-hand adversary will make a trick. I give him, of course, credit for knowing your three as well as you know his two trumps, in which case he will take care not to let you over-trump him, if he can help it, but will take the obvious chance of your being forced to trump and to lead from your tenace. But you may, and should, take a very good chance of making all four tricks, without any risk whatever, for your three tricks will be made in any case. You, therefore, instead of throwing away your losing spade, trump your partner's

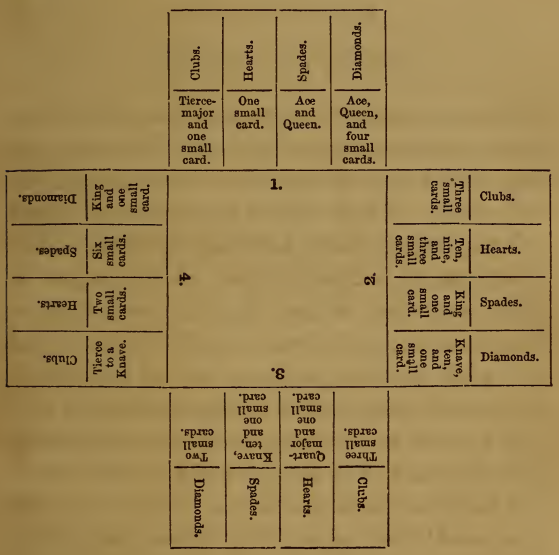
winning heart, and lead the spade. If he can win this trick, you remain with your ace, queen of trumps behind the king, knave, and must win all four tricks. But if your partner should not hold the winning spade, or if, holding it, it should be trumped, you have lost nothing, for you still make three tricks.

When, many years ago, I first thought of writing on Whist, it was my intention to have given a variety of hands and curious cases taken from actual experience, and arranged after the fashion of chess problems; but this has since been so excellently done by "Cavendish," that, were I to carry out my intention, I should appear to be unworthily poaching on a manor which is fairly his, and which I could not improve, and I have therefore restricted myself to giving such examples only as have been necessary for the illustration of the advice I have given. The whole work of "Cavendish" is admirable; the points of difference between us are very few; and if in this work I have written any thing of value, not the least valuable part of it will be the conclusion of this chapter, in which I urge all those who desire to become whist-players of the highest order to give a very careful study to the hands which "Cavendish" has arranged for them.

I may, however, permit myself to present to my readers one of the most beautiful problems I have ever seen. It occurred a few months back in actual play in Vienna, and at double dummy. Its story runs thus. The most celebrated player in Vienna had to play the hands Nos. 1 and 3. As soon as the cards were exposed, he exclaimed, "Why, I shall make all thirteen tricks!" This appeared impossible to the bystanders, for, although his hands were, between them, of commanding strength, still his adversary's hands, between them, held every suit guarded, except the trump. Large bets were made against the accomplishment of the feat, which was, however, performed; and it became evident that, if hands 1 and 3 are rightly played, hands 2 and 4 are utterly helpless, and, in spite of three guarded suits, must lose all thirteen tricks. I give the four hands below, and withhold the key to the mystery, in the hope that my readers will be at the trouble of finding it for themselves.

GREAT VIENNA COUP AT DOUBLE DUMMY.

Clubs are trumps. No. 1 leads, and makes all thirteen tricks.



CHAPTER III.

ASKING FOR TRUMPS.

THIS conventional sign was first introduced some twenty-five years back at Graham's, not long before the dissolution of that greatest of card-clubs. It was before long adopted by all club players, to whom, however, for some time, it was more or less restricted. It is now, so to speak, universal among English whist-players, though not as yet in use out of England, and it is of such great importance, and so imperfectly understood, as to require a separate chapter.

It consists in *throwing away an unnecessarily high card*, and it is requisite to pay great attention to this definition. Thus, if you have the deuce and three of a suit of which two rounds are played, by playing the three to the first round, and the deuce to the second, you have signified to your partner your wish that he should lead a trump as soon as he gets the lead. The same with any other higher card played *unnecessarily* before a lower.

I have heard it said thoughtlessly, but not unfrequently, that this is unfair, that it would be as well to make some sign with the finger, to kick your partner under the table, or to tell him openly to lead you a trump. Indeed, this last method would be the least objectionable of those alluded to, as your adversaries would gain as much information as your partner. But this charge of unfairness can only be made by those who have thought little of the principles and practice of whist. It is fair to give to your partner any intimation which could be given if the cards were placed on the table, each exactly in the same manner as the others, by a machine, the players being out of sight and hearing each of the others. Thus, if you play a king, and without obvious reason change your lead, it is generally understood that you hold the ace and knave. You throw away the ace of a suit in order to inform your partner that you hold in it the next best cards, and this very act of throwing away a higher card before a lower had, many years back, a different signification, and instructed your partner that you held but two cards in the suit.

The origin of this practice is so perfectly in the spirit of our game, when well played, that I

am somewhat surprised at the length of time which was required to reduce it to an understood signification. It arose thus. You have, let us suppose, a very strong hand in trumps, a strong suit, and two weak suits, say a queen and a small card in one, a knave and a small card in the other. Your adversary leads the king of one of your weak suits. You throw your queen in order to induce him to lead a trump for the protection of his suit, or to induce him at least to change his lead. He does not, however, fall into your trap, but plays his ace, and you play a small card. Your other weak suit is then probably led, and you follow the same tactics, but to no purpose. You have to deal with a shrewd adversary. Your partner gets the lead in the third round of one of these suits. How should he reason? He should see at once —and, if a good player, he would see at once— that you had endeavored in vain to tempt your adversaries to lead trumps, and he should do for you that from which they had wisely abstained. Again: it is, let us say, your partner's lead. He has two ace-king suits, and plays his two kings in order to show you his strength. To each you throw a high card. He reasons thus. My partner's hand is all, or nearly all, trumps and the

fourth suit. If it is not, he wishes me to think so, and thereby to induce me to lead him a trump. This method of play being as old as whist itself, it was certain, sooner or later, to be reduced to the conventional sign—good in the lowest cards as well as the highest—of which I now treat.

Asking for trumps is, then, a conventional sign, like any other, neither more nor less, open to no objection on the score of unfairness. Whether or not it is an improvement of the game is quite another question, but one which it is scarce worth while to argue here, as the practice exists, and cannot, to my thinking, be put an end to. At least, it has simplified the game to the indifferent player, and greatly diminished the advantage of skill. The time for leading trumps used to be the point of all others demanding the greatest judgment. Now, almost as often as not, the tyro knows whether his partner wishes trumps to be played. So much is this the case, that a player of great reputation, who claims such credit as may be due to the inventor of this signal, has often said that he bitterly regrets his ingenuity, which has deprived him of one-half of the advantage which he derived from his superior play. This practice, however, is established in England, and sooner or later it will travel. Let us con-

sider what ought to be its meaning, and how it may be made of the most value.

"I always ask for trumps when I wish them led," was the remark of a very good player. It was plausible, but wrong, for, although apparently good for his hand, it might be destructive to that of his partner. If the sign is merely to mean, "I think a trump would suit my hand," it is, in my opinion, of little use, and your partner would be justified in taking no notice of your request, if the state of his own hand led him to a contrary opinion. Very great strength in trumps justifies alone this intimation to your partner, who should treat it not as a request, but as a command. He should as it were hear you say to him, "I am so strong that, if you have any thing to assist me, I answer for the game, or, at least, for a great score. Throw all your strength into my hand, abandon your own game, at least lead me a trump, and leave the rest to me."

Surely, I have heard it argued, with two or three small trumps, and a great hand in the other suits, it would be right to ask for trumps. Certainly not. If a player is very strong in the other suits, he will very early get the lead, and it will be better that he should lead from his weak trumps than that he should be led to by his part-

ner. Looked at in this way, there are very few cases—I would almost say none—which justify the neglect of this command from a partner. Almost the only case which occurs to me is when you are yourself so strong that, unless your partner has thrown a card by mistake, you must have the whole game between you; and even here, if there is a possibility of missing the game, you are quite as likely to hit on it by disobedience as by attention to his wish.

A grave responsibility, then, attaches to the player who asks for a trump, and I have felt that responsibility so keenly, that it is not in my recollection that I ever took this liberty with my partner, by which I direct him to abandon his game, and blindly to play mine, when I held less than four trumps, two honors, or five trumps, one honor, along with cards in my own hand, or his, which made the fall of the trumps very plainly advantageous. I am far from saying that, with the strength in trumps which I have described, it is always, or even generally, advisable to ask for trumps. I have only ventured to lay down that which, in my opinion, should be the minimum.

I shall probably be told that in thus laying down a cast-iron rule, bending to no circum-

stances, I am much too "doctrinaire," and that such words as "never," or "always," cannot apply to the infinite chances of a game of cards. I freely admit that I have often been sorely tempted to break my rule. Nay, more, I am quite aware that I occasionally lose by my rigid adherence to it; but I am convinced that in the long run I gain far more than I lose, by the absolute certainty my partners feel as to the strength I must have when I give this indication. For it cannot be too well remembered, and I have noticed it before, that, more or less, the same players play together for months, or years,—it may be throughout their lives; and the best player is he who most carefully notes the peculiarities of the system, the greater or less certainty and excellence of each of his playfellows. I take it to be scarcely exaggeration to say that no man is a very fine whist-player among men with whom he is playing for the first time. His superior observation—the first quality in a great master of the game—stands him in little stead. But when all the players, or most of them, and their respective excellence, are known, it is difficult to overrate the value of a partner as to whom, when he plays in a certain way, you know, as if his cards were on the table, the exact state

of his hand. I ask for a trump. My partner knows that I hold at least four trumps and two honors, or five trumps and one honor. I may hold more. As the game proceeds, it probably becomes plain that I cannot hold five trumps. He knows then that I hold at least two honors. It would not be more clear to him if I showed him my cards. Or perhaps it becomes evident that I do not hold two honors. In this case my partner knows that I have at least five trumps and one honor. His play in all the suits is regulated by information such as this, and, if he knows what he is about, he plays to an advantage not easy to over-calculate.

But what happens when you have a partner who asks for a trump because, on the whole, "he thinks it would suit his hand," and who, on these slight grounds, thinks himself at liberty to dictate to you the most important act of the hand? He asks for trumps with but little strength,—say a knave and three small trumps, and a fair hand, —his adversaries threatening to trump his best suit. Perhaps the coup comes off right, and he exults; perhaps it comes off wrong, and he adds to his offence the aggravation of saying, "We must have lost the game anyhow;" perhaps it does neither harm nor good, but leaves things

as they would have been in any other way. However this may be, the mere effect on the one particular hand is of little consequence, but for months afterwards—for all time, probably—you enter that man in your memory as a partner not to be trusted. He asks you for trumps; it may be six weeks after his former flippant demand; you know him capable of doing so for insufficient reason; you distrust him, and very rightly; he is like a ticket-of-leave man, who, having done wrong once, is likely to sin again; the game is in danger, you disregard his wish, play your own game, and there is an end to the confidence which should exist between partners if they are to enjoy the full advantages of their partnership.

Those who agree with my view of this matter will, as a necessary consequence of their confidence in a good partner, throw their strength into his hand when he requires them to lead a trump. With two or three trumps they will lead their best, and if it makes the trick they will follow with the next best. With the ace and queen, they will play the ace and then the queen, &c. With four trumps, however, unless one of them is the ace, I think it still right to lead the lowest. With the ace and others, play the ace, as your partner may have asked, from a very long

suit, in which case you will probably catch an honor from your adversary.

In asking for a trump, it is rarely safe to give the invitation in your partner's lead with a high card,—a knave or a queen. Your partner commences with an ace-king suit. You throw the knave, having a small card of the suit. If he has a very weak hand he perhaps changes the suit, in fear of drawing your queen, if you have it, or, under any circumstances, of leaving the adversary in command of the suit and exposing you to be forced. Or, if he has fair strength, he probably plays a small card of the suit, in the hope that you may hold the queen, and in the belief that, if you have it not, you will trump. To his great consternation, he finds you with a small card, and the trick is lost.

It must also be very carefully observed that this invitation must be given in the first round of a suit. If it is to be permitted to play your lowest card—say the deuce—to the first round of a suit, and afterwards to play a high card—say a knave—holding a lower one, to be played in the third round, in the idea that this is asking for trumps, there is an end to playing false cards, on pain of your partner mistaking your intention, and, right or wrong, leading you a trump. Now,

although false cards are very rarely advisable, no one will say that they ought never to be played.

In conclusion, I again draw attention to the definition of asking for trumps, viz.: "throwing away an unnecessarily high card." Mistakes in this practice are of very frequent occurrence, in some such way as this. My partner is second to play, and holds, say, the ten and a small card of the suit, which the adversary opens with a small card. My partner, being second player, plays his ten, and the trick is taken with the king, the lead is returned, and the original leader takes with the ace, my partner throwing his small card. He thinks that he has asked me for a trump, but he has done no such thing. His ten is not, as far as I can tell, an *unnecessarily* high card. It is an effort to take the trick. It may be played in the ordinary way from knave, ten, and a small card of the suit. He could only have given in this way a legitimate invitation for a trump, if the card originally led had been higher than his ten, which in this case would have been an unnecessarily high card. I venture, then, to give the following advice for the regulation of this practice:—

To ask for a trump, you must throw away

an *unnecessarily* high card, playing afterwards a smaller card of the same suit.

You are not justified in asking for a trump with less than two honors, four trumps, or one honor, five, and cards in your own or your partner's hand, which appear to make the fall of the trumps desirable. If I am forced to admit some exception to this rigid rule, it will only be towards the end of the hand, when the cards are so far known—when perhaps it is evident that your partner must hold certain cards, or fail to save or win the game—that it may be justifiable to ask for trumps with less than the strength which I have indicated.

The demand must be made in the first round of the suit, unless it is right for you to take, or attempt to take, the trick in the first round, in which case the demand may be made in the second and third rounds of the suit. Thus, if, being second player, it has been right for you to cover a high card, or if you have taken the first trick in a suit, you are not precluded from asking for trumps in that suit, if it should subsequently appear advisable to do so.

Be careful of asking, especially in your partner's lead, with an honor, or even with a ten.

With three cards in a suit, do not ask with

your highest. The middle card will be less likely to mislead your partner, and will give you an opportunity, if you see occasion, to change your tactics, and, by playing a higher card to the second round, to conceal your request at least for a time. When you are at last obliged to play your lowest card, your partner, if he is a good player, will understand your change of intention.

When your partner asks for a trump, sacrifice your game to his, lead your highest and your second best trump, if you have the opportunity and have two or three trumps. With four trumps, unless the ace is one of them, lead the lowest; but in either case play your hand generally, so as to strengthen his. Having an ace and others, however, in trumps, always play out your ace, even holding three or more other cards in the suit.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCIPLES WHICH SHOULD GUIDE DECISIONS.

HOWEVER carefully laws may have been framed, cases will not unfrequently occur for which it has been impossible to provide, and which should therefore be referred for decision to some player of recognized judgment, well acquainted with the laws of whist. If he happens to be a good lawyer to boot, so much the better; for I have known many questions at this game not unworthy of a lawyer's practised acuteness, and of the habit, which his profession gives him, of weighing right and wrong.

The arbitrator will do well to bear in mind the following principles, and to construe by their light such laws as may bear on the case referred to him, or, under their guidance, to establish a precedent where there exists no law, which even by analogy may assist him.

The chief object of the laws of whist is to prevent an unfair advantage being gained by any

one. Each case must, therefore, be judged, not by that which was the probable intention of the player interested in it, but by that which might have been the intention of a player disposed to take such unfair advantage.

There is no object in a penalty for an error by which he who commits it can by no possibility profit. Thus, Dummy's partner may, without being liable to any penalty, expose some or all of his cards.

No player can profit by his own mistake.

Where two or more players are in fault, it must be considered with whom the first fault lies, and how far it induced, or, it may be, invited, the subsequent offence of his adversary.

All penalties should be as nearly as possible in proportion to that which might have been gained by the offence if unnoticed.

In illustration of the above principles, I subjoin a few disputed cases, and the decisions on them.

Case 1.—A. says, "I have the game." He is desired to lay his cards on the table; complies with the request; they are called, and he makes four by tricks, this being one short of the game. He allows his adversary to deal, who, having completed his deal, says, "You would have been game,

if you had scored your honors." A. then claims to have won the game, because his original assertion was correct, and because he only forgot to score his honors owing to his being confused by his claim being disputed, and by his cards being called.

Decision.—A. cannot score his honors. His original claim was irregular, and he was at least bound, at some time or other, within the limit assigned by the law, to state in what way he claimed to win the game, whether by tricks and honors, or otherwise. He did not do so, and cannot complain if he suffers by a confusion introduced by his own irregularity. It is quite possible that, in a similar case, a player should not have observed his honors until informed of them, but should have thought himself sure of five by cards.

Case 2.—A. has the last trump, and one suit only, all winning cards, if played in their usual order, viz., the highest first. The lead is with his right-hand adversary, for whom he does not wait, but lays his thirteenth trump on the table, saying that it is the card he shall play to the coming trick, after which he plays out his suit, waiting for no one, the highest first, and one after

the other. His adversary claims to call all these cards.

Decision.—A.'s cards are not liable to be called. He has, however, declared the card which he will play to the coming trick, and this must be considered to be, as against him, a legitimate act of playing. If, therefore, his adversary has a card of A.'s long suit, and leads it, A. has made a revoke, which is past recovery, as, although no trick has been turned and quitted, he has played to a subsequent trick.

This decision was much canvassed, but at last obtained general assent. I think that it was right. A player can in no way profit by prematurely declaring, or showing the card which he will play to his right-hand adversary's lead. Such declaration being taken as an act of playing, he runs a gratuitous risk. If the adversary has no card of the player's suit, again, nothing can by possibility be gained by the offender's irregularity, and he may, subject to the risk of having miscalculated, save time without incurring punishment. It may be, however, that his partner may have a card or more of the player's long suit, in which case he would be amenable to the law, which gives to his adversary the right of calling on his

partner to take, if he can, any of the tricks irregularly played.

Case 3.—A. and B. are at the score of four. They lose the trick, hold two by honors, but they have revoked. Their adversaries, who had no previous score, elect to punish the offenders by deducting three from their score, thus leaving the game at "one all." On this A. and B. claim to mark their honors, saying that there is nothing to prevent their so doing, as they are no longer at the score of four. They also urge that, if this case has not been distinctly provided for by law, it is within the powers of an arbitrator to supply the omission.

Decision.—A. and B. cannot score their honors. Their claim is bad on every consideration. When they reached the score of four, they lost the right to score honors, and it is not reasonable that they should recover the right by committing a fault. Again, the laws of whist, in the case of a revoke, give to the aggrieved players the choice of any one of three ways of exacting the penalty. If the claim of A. and B. is good, the option is practically limited to one of two ways, when the revoking players are at the score of four,—a restriction for which there is no reason, and which cannot have been the intention of the framers of

the law. But it is argued that this is an omission in the laws, to supply which is within the powers of an arbitrator. It is true that an arbitrator may supply a palpable omission in the laws, when such omission inflicts an injury on innocent parties, but it cannot be right for him to do so when the only result of his labor is to give an advantage to players who have committed an offence. There is, however, no omission in this case. If it had been intended, in any position of the game, or under any circumstances, to narrow the penalty for a revoke, it would have been so stated. To state the contrary is unnecessary.

Case 4.—The dealer deals the last two cards on the packet of his right-hand adversary. Has he misdealt?

Decision.—He has misdealt. Two laws, somewhat contradictory the one to the other, bear on this case. If the dealer deals two cards at once, he may rectify his error, provided that such rectification can be effected by the change of the position of one card only, and this law would appear to give to the dealer the right of correcting his error. But another law declares that the deal is lost if the dealer places the trump card, its face downward, on his own or any other packet. In this conflict, the doubt must be construed against

the offender, for which in this case there is all the more reason, because the trump card has a peculiarly sacred character, which entitles it to more than ordinary protection against any confusion.

Any doubt as to the above case has been set at rest by the laws now published with the highest official club sanction, and which especially provide against the difficulty.

Case 5.—A., as he believes, misdeals, cuts to his adversary, who deals, and finds that his pack contains fifty-three cards, the surplus card being ascertained to be one which is missing from A.'s pack. Can A. claim to take back his deal?

Decision.—No. A. should have counted his pack in order to ascertain whether or no it was complete. It may have been so, and the surplus card may have found its way into B.'s pack after A.'s deal. A. parted with his right when he cut to his adversary, which, however, he might have done under protest, while counting his own pack.

Case 6.—A., who has the lead, places on the table a sufficient number of cards, all winning cards as against his adversary, to win the game, saying, "You may call them." Have his adversaries no other remedy?

Decision.—A.'s cards, in this case, are not exposed cards. As against himself, his adversaries have the right to treat them as played cards, and, having been played by him without waiting for his partner to play, his partner may be called on to win any one of them which he may be able to win, the remainder being then treated as exposed cards. A. had no right to prevent his partner from taking the lead out of his hand by a blunder, however gross.

Case 7.—A., being fourth player, renounces. The trick is his partner's, but his adversary immediately turns and quits it. A. then finds that he has revoked. Is he too late to correct his error?

Decision.—A. is in time to correct his error, unless he or his partner have played again. The adversary had no right to meddle with his partner's trick, whose turning and quitting, or that of A. himself, alone could have completed the revoke.

Case 8.—A. takes a trick by trumping, and, as this trick makes him game, he throws down the remainder of his cards. It is then discovered that he has revoked. Is he too late to correct his error? He claims to correct it, his cards remaining to be dealt with as exposed cards.

Decision.—A. has revoked. His claim of the game, and throwing down his cards, must be held, as against himself, as an act of playing. His cards are also liable to be called.

THE END.

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